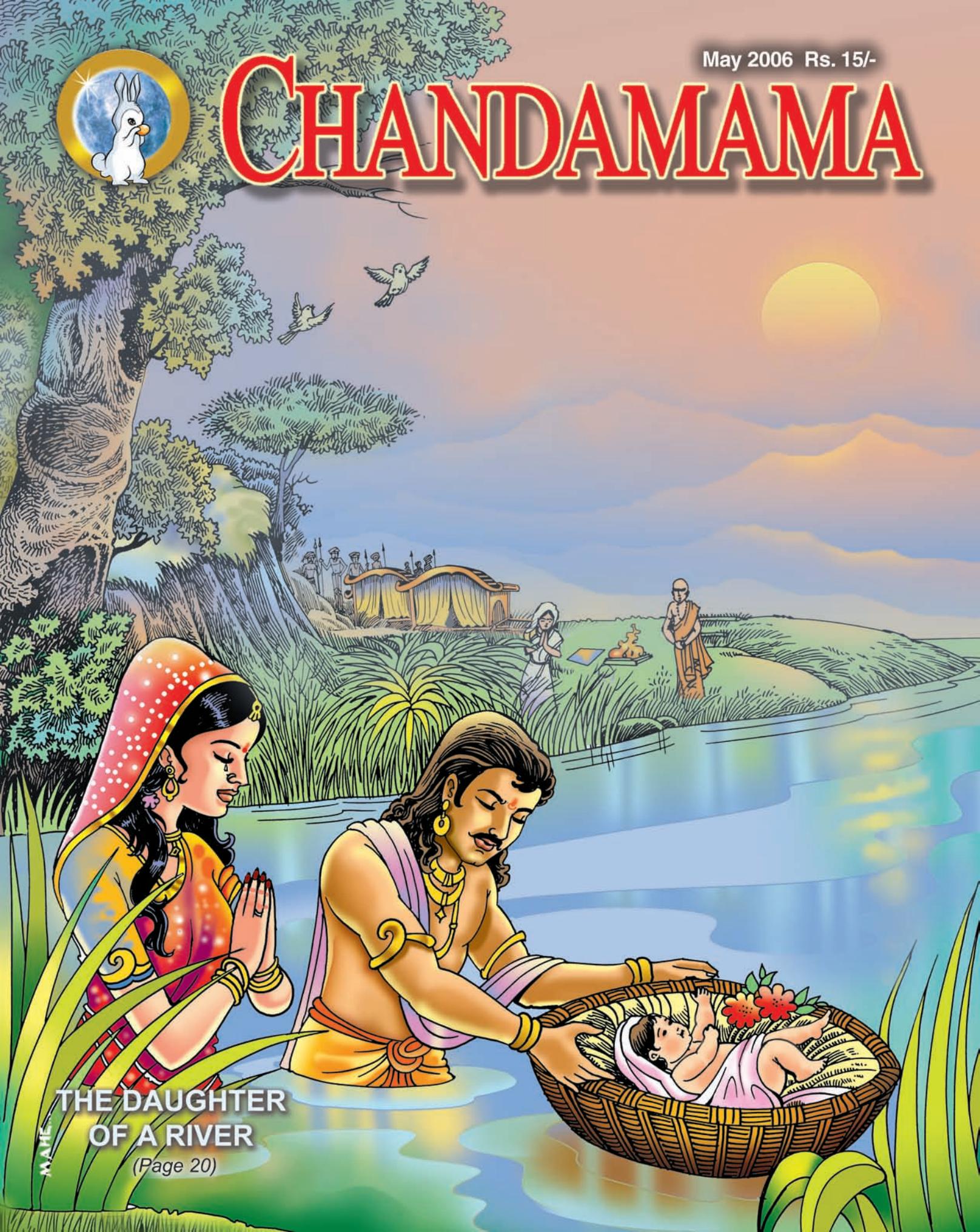


May 2006 Rs. 15/-

CHANDAMAMA



THE DAUGHTER
OF A RIVER
(Page 20)

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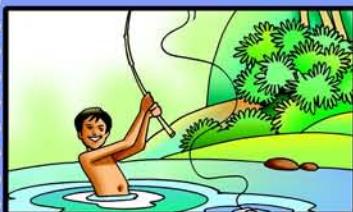
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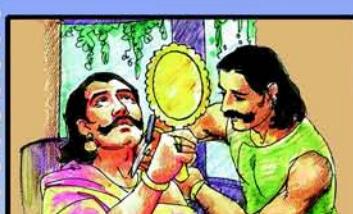
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BUILDING UP A FAMILY OF FAMILIES

It is vacation time for children in India in May and a few weeks in June. A majority of them, especially those living in metropolitan cities and big towns, are taken to their native places to spend their holidays with their grandparents. How eagerly they would have looked forward to this home-coming after a long gap of nine or ten months! This family re-union lifts up an otherwise drab life led by elderly people away from their kith and kin. For children, especially the ones below 14 or 15 years, such return to their roots is a welcome change.

Suppose such an opportunity does not come their way because of extraneous circumstances. How can children make the days stuck in their homes give them a change from the routine home-school-home life? How about giving relief to the elders from their daily chores? Like keeping the house spic and span and even sprucing up the rooms? Tending the garden if there is a courtyard in front or at the back or on the roof? Suddenly you realise that you don't remember when a particular flower had blossomed on the plant right in your presence. You can even help your mother in the kitchen, by cooking simple items. The hot summer is no time for feasts, hence easy-to-do fruit-chats, semi-cooked vegetables and green leaves which you find provide a new taste you might have missed.

Well, this activity need not be confined to the four walls that make your home. You can think of community life in your area and get endeared to the families by attending to the needs of the colony which will bring children together with common objectives, result in fellowship-rather a family of families. This can be a good method of getting hands-on experience in community leadership. The spirit of oneness builds up unity among the people.

Thus, you can convert your vacation to give back to your parents, even in a small measure, the time and efforts they had spent on you.

War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families. Any scourge is preferable to it.

- Martin Luther

If you never tell your secret to your friend, you will never fear him when he becomes your enemy.

No just man ever became rich all at once

- Menander

A study of economics usually reveals that the best time to buy anything is last year.

- Marty Allen

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This came from Abu Dhabi :

My name is Gayathri. I am 8 years old. I started reading *Chandamama* two years ago. I like the magazine, so this year I asked my father to subscribe for the magazine. I am now getting it regularly. My favourites are Laugh Till You Drop and Photo Caption Contest.

***R.Sai Lakshmi of
Rajahmundry has this to say :***

I am reading *Chandamama* for the last three years. It gives me and my little brother a lot of knowledge and information. Like Science Fair which tells us about scientists. We love the Kaleidoscope pages and the Indian history stories. Our parents love Mythology and News Flash.

***Reader A.Siddhartha of
Brahmanwas, Rohtak, writes :***

I read the story "A Question of Justice". It is quite interesting that King Chandrapir was kind to the poor cobbler and did not grab his land for the sake of a temple he was building. This has a moral to present day rulers. Thousands of people are evicted from their lands and homes in the name of big projects without re-settling them. How inhuman they are! I am sure *Chandmama* need to be read by the people in government.

By e-mail from Keshav Ramu :

I just love *Chandamama*. I like Garuda and the Hodja (Mulla Nasruddin) stories. Why don't you continue G-Man? It would be nice if you introduce a section for Sports.

MAIL BAG

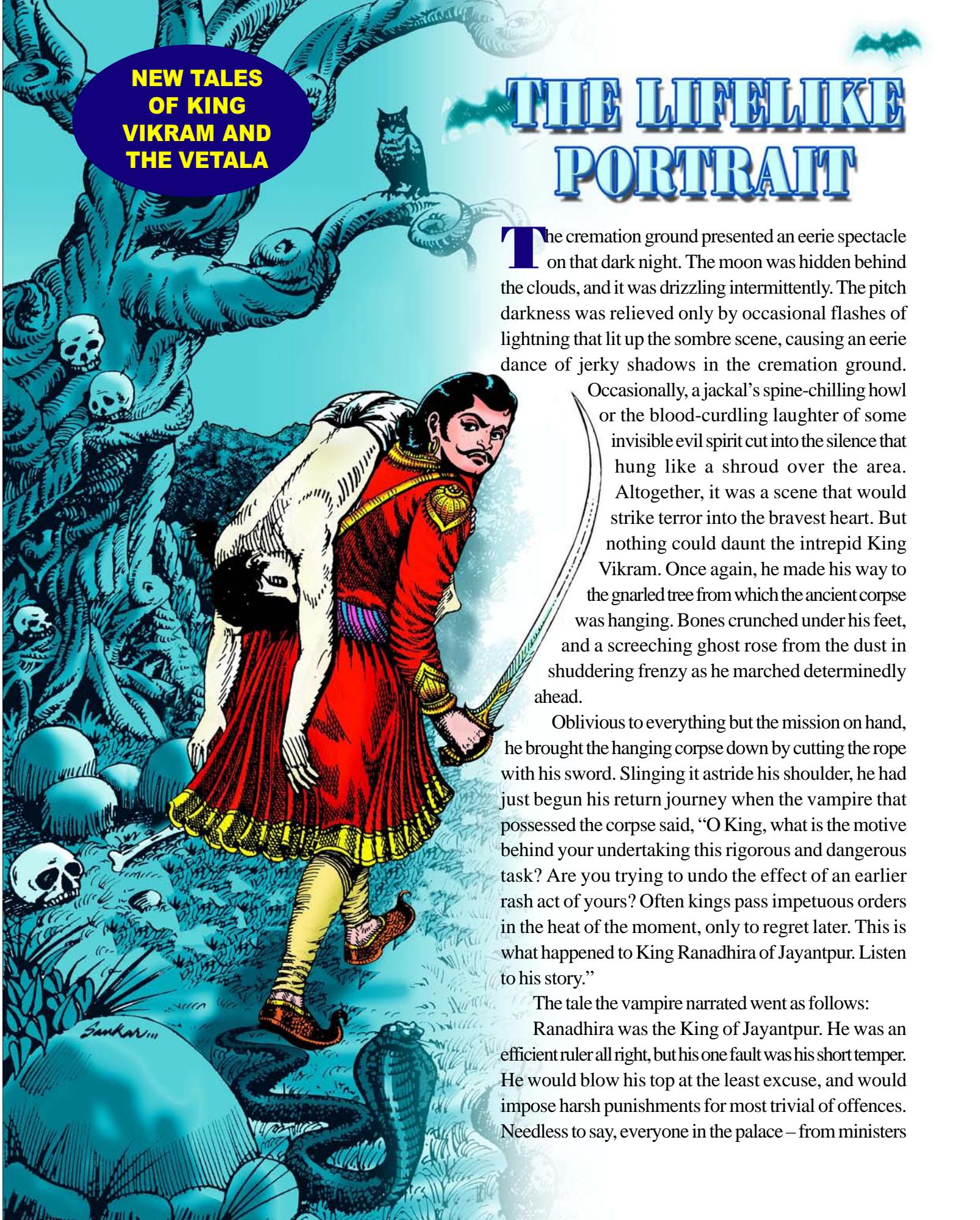


***This from I.Akhil Sai Kumar of
Secunderabad :***

I am studying in 8th Standard. At first I thought *Chandamama* was another money-making magazine, and there will be nothing interesting. Some time later, my friend gave me a copy and asked me to read it. Ever since then, I have collected all copies. The stories are very interesting. The Arabian Nights comics and the Vetala stories are all very nice. I am now telling all my friends to read this magazine.

***Reader Priya Srinivas,
Chennai, has this to say:***

I really love *Chandamama*, as it gives a lot of information. I like everything, from the quotations on the first page to the Kaleidoscope pages. The poems are well-written. Pratikshya's mother has shown the value of money to her daughter. The column Indiascope is very good. I love Ruskin Bond's stories. Please add a page of recipes which we children can attempt during our holidays.



NEW TALES OF KING VIKRAM AND THE VETALA

THE LIFELIKE PORTRAIT

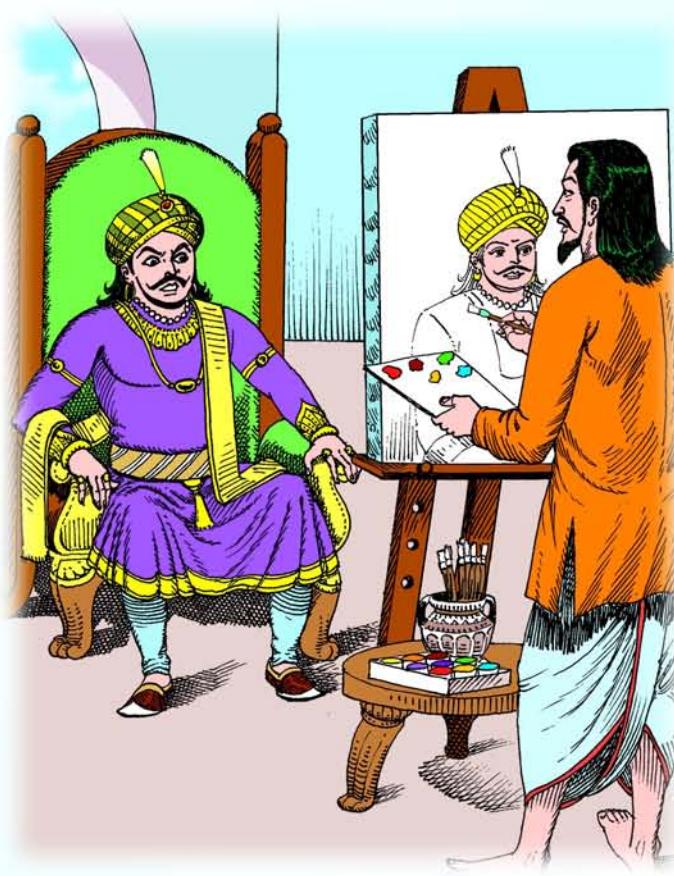
The cremation ground presented an eerie spectacle on that dark night. The moon was hidden behind the clouds, and it was drizzling intermittently. The pitch darkness was relieved only by occasional flashes of lightning that lit up the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky shadows in the cremation ground.

Occasionally, a jackal's spine-chilling howl or the blood-curdling laughter of some invisible evil spirit cut into the silence that hung like a shroud over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that would strike terror into the bravest heart. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the gnarled tree from which the ancient corpse was hanging. Bones crunched under his feet, and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched determinedly ahead.

Oblivious to everything but the mission on hand, he brought the hanging corpse down by cutting the rope with his sword. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, what is the motive behind your undertaking this rigorous and dangerous task? Are you trying to undo the effect of an earlier rash act of yours? Often kings pass impetuous orders in the heat of the moment, only to regret later. This is what happened to King Ranadhira of Jayantpur. Listen to his story."

The tale the vampire narrated went as follows:

Ranadhira was the King of Jayantpur. He was an efficient ruler all right, but his one fault was his short temper. He would blow his top at the least excuse, and would impose harsh punishments for most trivial of offences. Needless to say, everyone in the palace – from ministers



to menials – lived in constant fear of incurring the king's wrath.

One day, the king decided to have his portrait painted. When the news was announced, numerous artists from different lands reached the king's court, volunteering their services for the job.

However, the king now made another announcement that shocked one and all. He declared, "The job is open to anyone who wishes to try. But remember this – if the portrait satisfies me, the artist will be handsomely rewarded; otherwise, he will be subjected to ten whiplashes!"

Knowing the king's irascible nature, most of the artists hesitated to take up the assignment. However, artist Nagavarma expressed his willingness to paint the portrait. He was given two rooms in the palace as his studio and living quarters. The king posed for him every day, and the work made fast progress.

Nagavarma put his heart and soul into the job and painted with all the skill at his command. Finally, the work was completed. With great hopes, he took the portrait

to the court and ceremoniously unveiled it before the king.

Alas! The moment the king's eyes fell on it, his face went red with rage and he roared, "Chee! Is this supposed to be my portrait? What sort of artist are you?"

Unfortunately for Nagavarma, the rest of the court concurred with the king's opinion and declared that the portrait did not resemble the king at all! The artist was given ten whiplashes and sent away in ignominy.

A few days later, another artist named Vijay presented himself at the court and requested the king, "Your Majesty, kindly give me leave to paint your portrait."

The king agreed, and Vijay started work on the painting the same day. A week later, he brought the finished portrait to the king while he was holding his *darbar*.

The king took one look at the portrait and thundered, "What is this? You've the audacity to depict me as looking so cruel?! You shall be given not ten, but twenty whiplashes!"

"Pardon me, Your Highness," interjected Vijay humbly, "but my aim was to draw a realistic portrait. You would observe that a fawn, even while drinking from a lake in a safe place, starts at the slightest sound and looks around with terrified eyes. On the other hand, a tiger, even in repose, has bloodshot eyes and a fierce expression. That is the inherent nature of each of these animals. An artist's aspiration is to capture this natural expression on canvas."

"How dare you make me look so ugly?" shouted the king. "Are you aware of the consequences of displeasing me? I can have you beheaded!"

"I know that, Your Majesty. But an artist is duty-bound to be true to his art. And a truthful man need fear no one!" said Vijay, politely but firmly. He went on: "But I've one request. Before taking any decision, kindly show this portrait to the rest of the court. I would like to know what they think about it."

The king held up the portrait to the assembly and demanded in a furious tone, "What's your opinion – does this picture resemble me?"

To all those who gazed upon the portrait, it was clear that it was King Ranadhira to the life, complete with the

angry frown, bloodshot eyes and ruddy visage! However, no one dared say so for fear of incurring the king's wrath. There was pin-drop silence in the hall.

Finally, the ageing chief minister spoke up: "Your Majesty! I cannot comment on the propriety of the artist who has drawn such a portrait. But I can tell you that as regards likeness, it is perfect! Every detail of your face and your mood have been brilliantly captured by the artist on canvas. A casual glance at the portrait is sufficient to tell anyone that it represents you." As he finished speaking, a loud murmur of assent rose from the hitherto silent assembly.

For a moment, the king stood dumbfounded. Then, he rewarded Vijay with a thousand gold coins and sent him away. He ordered for the portrait to be hung in his private chamber.

From then on, the king would spend some time in front of the portrait as soon as he woke up in the morning. He studied the harsh lines on the face and made a conscious effort to wipe out those lines from his own face. Whenever he lost his temper, the recollection of the portrait would flash in his mind and he would instantly calm down.

In this manner, within a few days the king changed beyond all recognition. He had metamorphosed into a calm, even-tempered and soft-spoken person. Then, one day he summoned Vijay and asked him to paint his portrait once again.

Vijay answered, "O King, now it is not I, but my friend Nagavarma who should paint your portrait. He is a fine painter. Or even if you don't wish to have your portrait painted by him, kindly accept the original portrait he did of you and look at it once again. It portrays you in a serene, majestic attitude; I feel you'll find it lifelike now."

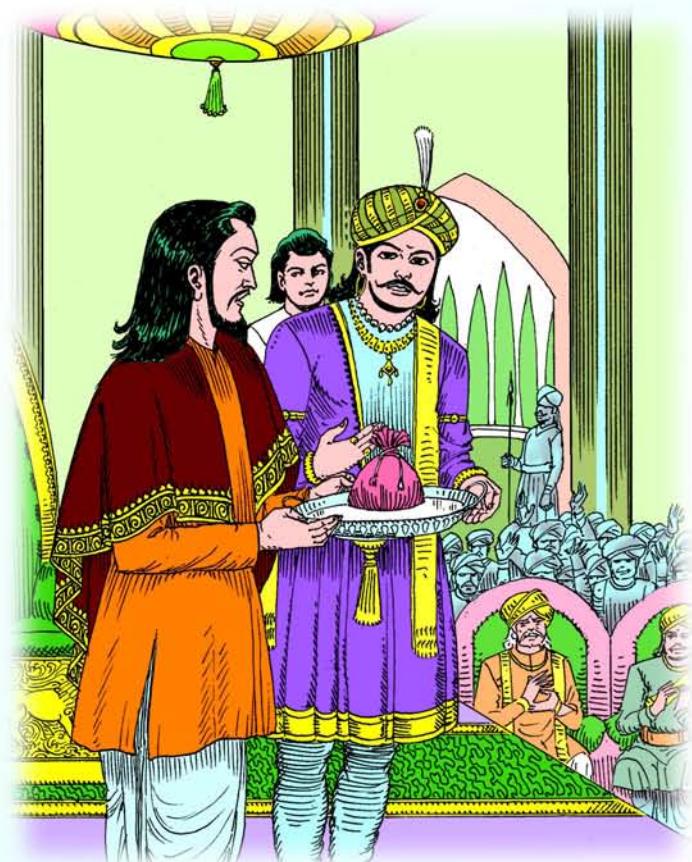
The king was surprised – he did not know that Vijay was Nagavarma's friend. He sent for Nagavarma's portrait and re-examined it. He was astonished to find that it was indeed lifelike!

The king summoned Nagavarma, apologised to him and made him his official painter. He also rewarded Vijay handsomely before sending him away.

The vampire concluded the story at this point and

demanded, "O King, isn't King Ranadhira's behaviour inconsistent and self-contradictory? First, he found Nagavarma's work substandard and publicly humiliated him for the same; subsequently, he appreciated the same painting and appointed Nagavarma the court-painter on its strength! Doesn't this absurd conduct reflect the king's foolishness? Moreover, why did he honour both the artists in different ways? Wasn't it because he couldn't decide which of them was superior? If you know the answer, speak out – otherwise, your head would shatter into smithereens!"

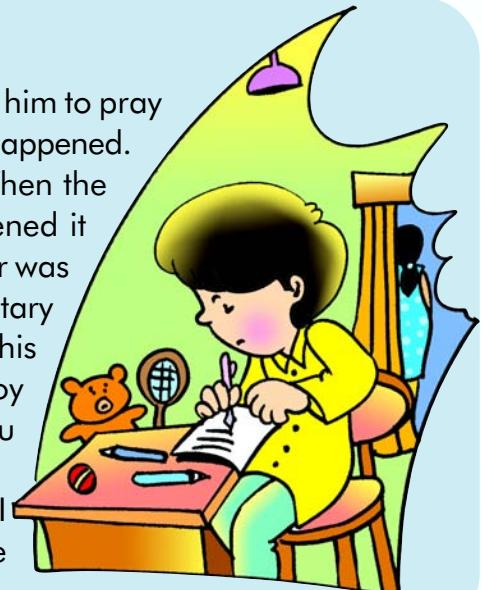
King Vikram calmly answered, "King Ranadhira's behaviour is not really inconsistent. Initially he was an irascible man; but subsequent circumstances reformed his character. At first, he was going to impose a harsh punishment on Vijay, too, but the intervention of the old minister and the rest of the assembly forced him to change his stance and reward him instead. Later, as he thought over the matter calmly, he realised that the fault was not in the painting, but in his own nature. If he looked ugly in the portrait, it was because his temper gave him that



A LETTER TO GOD

A little boy badly wanted five hundred rupees. His mother told him to pray to God for it. He prayed and prayed for two weeks, but nothing happened. Then he thought perhaps he should write a letter to God. When the postal authorities saw the letter addressed to God, they opened it and decided to send it to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was so impressed, touched and amused that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a cheque for Rs.500/-. He thought this would appear to be a lot of money to a little boy. The little boy was delighted with the gift and sat down to write a thank you letter to God which ran as follows:

Dear God, Thank you very much for sending me the money. I noticed that you had to send it by cheque. Henceforth, please send only Money Orders.

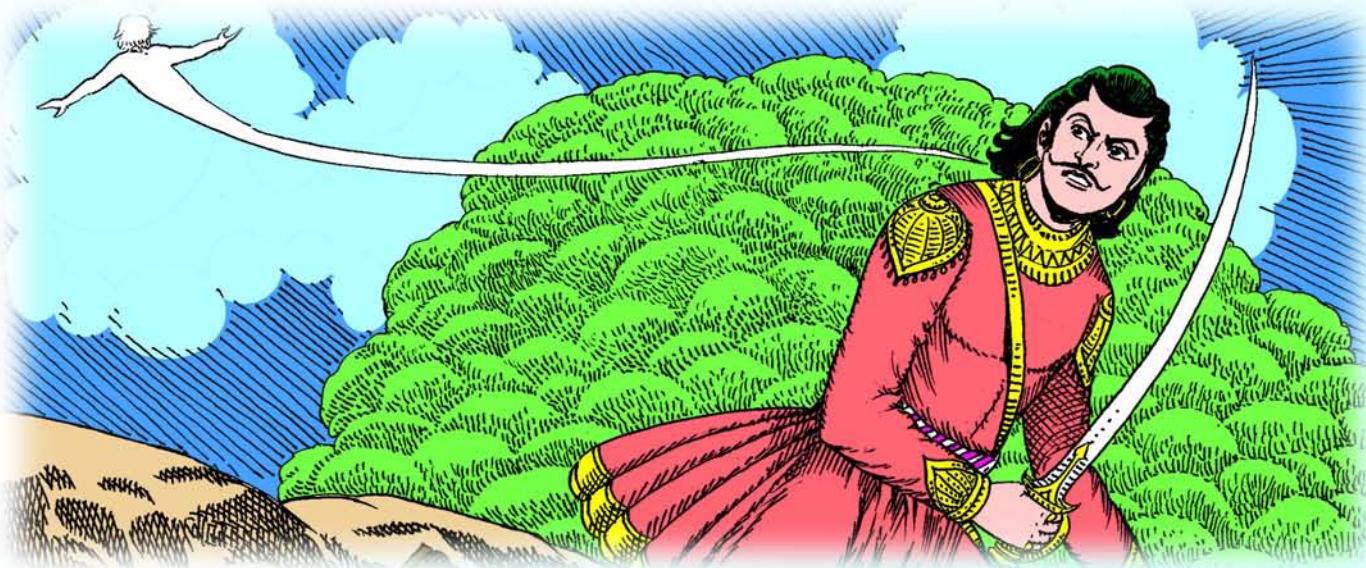


expression most of the time! So, he consciously tried to alter his appearance by not giving in to anger. Now that he no longer resembled the haughty person in the portrait, he wanted a new portrait of himself. On examining Nagavarma's discarded painting, he realised that it depicted him without any of his negative qualities – as he now appeared! The reason why his courtiers had failed to recognise the likeness at that time was that they had never seen him in a calm, gracious attitude! But the artist had portrayed him in that attitude, using his imagination, and now that the king had deliberately adopted the same attitude, the likeness was clear for all to see.

"Regarding the question of why he honoured the two

artists differently, it is evident that both were great artists. But while Vijay portrayed his subjects realistically, as he saw them, Nagavarma removed the blemishes and depicted an ideal portrait of how the king should be. In honouring both, the king only revealed his intelligence and maturity."

On hearing this, the vampire nodded in approval, before going off into peal after peal of thunderous laughter. The next moment, he, along with the corpse, moved off the king's shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the ancient tree. King Vikram gave a little sigh as he gazed upon the scene. Then, he squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree.



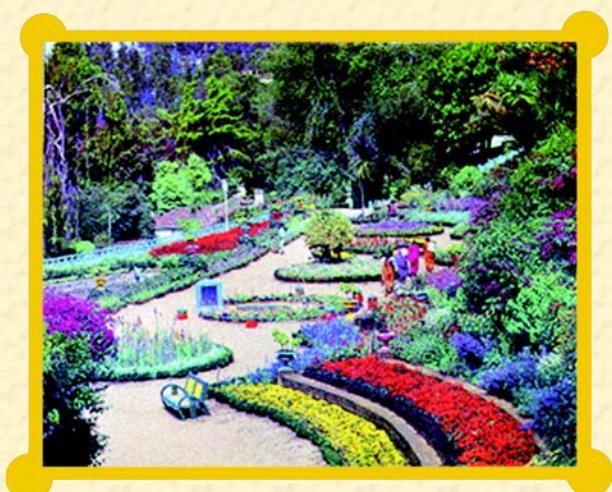


A FESTIVAL WITH SUBDUED JOY

The full moon day or Poornima in the month of Vaisakh (April-May) is a great occasion for the followers of Buddhism all over the world. For, it was on this day the Buddha (then Prince Gautama) was born, the day He got Enlightenment, also the day He attained Nirvana or salvation. Buddhists are spread all over in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Tibet, China, Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Mongolia, Bhutan, Cambodia and Japan, where a festive mood prevails. In India, however, there is no special gaiety or abandon. The Buddhists observe the day in peaceful joy. They wear white clothes, and visit Viharas where, besides the usual worship, there will be non-stop recitation from the Buddhist scriptures. The main centres of celebration in India are Bodh Gaya in Bihar where exists the Bodhi tree, beneath which the Buddha attained Enlightenment, and Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh where a stupa had been built. The Mahabodhi temple next to the Bodhi tree is bedecked with colourful flags and decorated with flowers. This year Buddha Poornima comes off on May 13.



The month of May witnesses an International Flower Festival in Sikkim and a month-long Summer Festival in Ootacamund (Ooty) in Tamil Nadu. The tiny State of Sikkim, famous for its flora, which is in full bloom in the sunny summer months, has some 600 species of orchids, 150 varieties of gladioli, about 50 kinds of rhododentrons and quite a few varieties of magnolias. Flower Shows are held in different centres during May.



Ooty will this year hold the 110th Flower Show in May, when the Government Botanical Gardens will be a riot of colours. Laid out in 1847, the Ooty Botanical Gardens is one of the oldest in India. It has 650 species of plants, including the only cork tree in India, a paper bark tree, and a monkey-puzzle tree on which monkeys cannot climb! The Flower Show is the pride of the summer festival. Flowers from countries like the USA, UK, Germany and France will also be on display.



From the
pen of
**RUSKIN
BOND**

THE POOL

It was going to rain. I could see the rain moving across the foothills, and I could smell it in the breeze. But, instead of turning homewards, I pushed my way through the leaves and brambles that grew across the forest path. I had heard the sound of running water at the bottom of the hill, and I was determined to find this hidden stream.

I had to slide down a rock face into a small ravine, and there I found the stream running over a bed of shingle. I removed my shoes and started walking upstream. A large glossy black bird with a curved red beak hooted at

me as I passed and a paradise flycatcher—this one I couldn't fail to recognize, with its long fan-like tail beating the air—swooped across the stream. Water trickled down from the hillside, from amongst ferns and grasses and wild flowers; and the hills, rising steeply on either side, kept the ravine in shadow. The rocks were smooth, almost soft, and some of them were grey and some yellow. A small waterfall came down the rocks and formed a deep round pool of apple-green water.

When I saw the pool, I turned and ran home. I wanted to tell Anil and Kamal about it. It had begun to rain, but I didn't stop to take shelter; I ran all the way home—through the sal forest, across the dry river-bed, through the outskirts of the town.

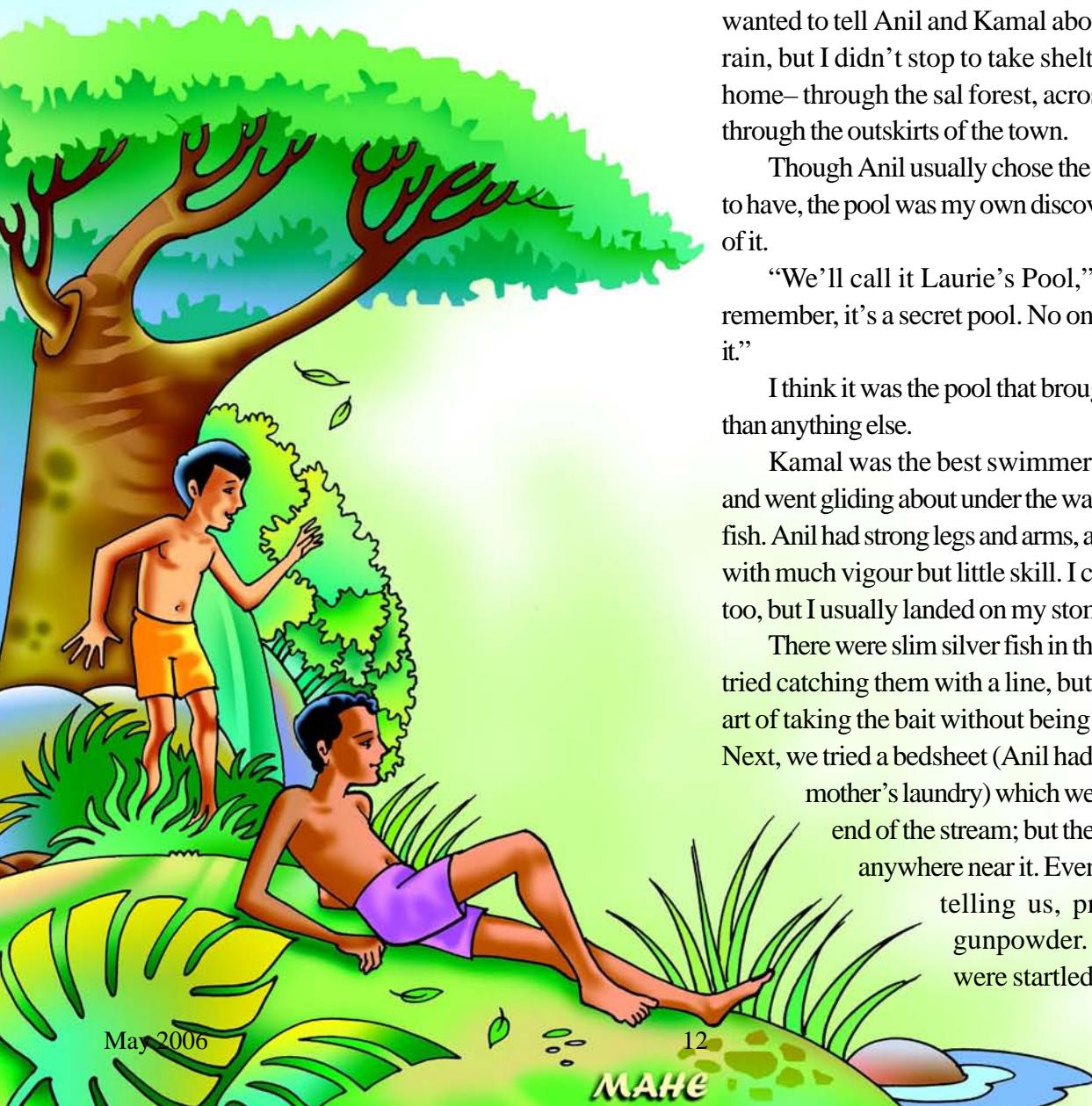
Though Anil usually chose the adventures we were to have, the pool was my own discovery, and I was proud of it.

“We'll call it Laurie's Pool,” said Kamal. “And remember, it's a secret pool. No one else must know of it.”

I think it was the pool that brought us together more than anything else.

Kamal was the best swimmer. He dived off rocks and went gliding about under the water like a long golden fish. Anil had strong legs and arms, and he thrashed about with much vigour but little skill. I could dive off a rock, too, but I usually landed on my stomach.

There were slim silver fish in the stream. At first, we tried catching them with a line, but they soon learnt the art of taking the bait without being caught on the hook. Next, we tried a bedsheets (Anil had removed it from his mother's laundry) which we stretched across one end of the stream; but the fish wouldn't come anywhere near it. Eventually Anil, without telling us, procured a stick of gunpowder. And Kamal and I were startled out of an afternoon



siesta by a flash across the water and a deafening explosion. Half the hillside tumbled into the pool, and Anil along with it. We pulled him out, along with a large supply of stunned fish which were too small for eating. Anil, however, didn't want all his work to go waste; so he roasted the fish over a fire and ate them himself.

The effects of the explosion gave Anil another idea, which was to enlarge our pool by building a dam across one end. This he accomplished with our combined labour. But he had chosen a week when there had been heavy rain in the hills, and we had barely finished the dam when a torrent of water came rushing down the bed of the stream, bursting our earthworks and flooding the ravine. Our clothes were carried away by the current, and we had to wait until it was night before creeping into town through the darkest alleyways. Anil was spotted at a street corner, but he posed as a naked sadhu and began calling for alms, and finally slipped in through the back door of his house without being recognized. I had to lend Kamal some of my clothes and these, being on the small side, made him look odd and gangly.

Our other activities at the pool included wrestling and buffalo riding.

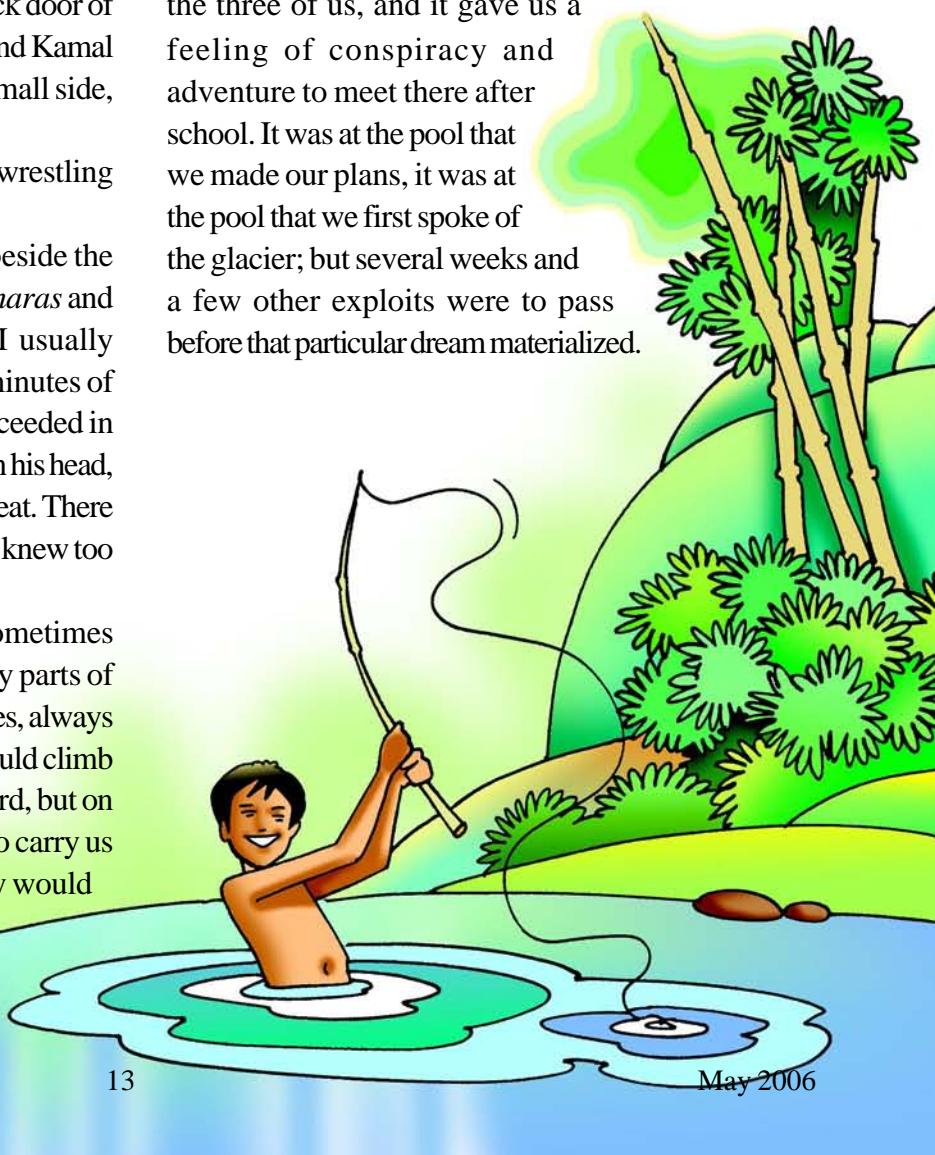
We wrestled on a strip of sand that ran beside the stream. Anil had often attended wrestling *akharas* and was something of an expert. Kamal and I usually combined against him and after five or ten minutes of furious, unscientific struggle, we usually succeeded in flattening Anil into the sand; Kamal would sit on his head, and I would sit on his legs until he admitted defeat. There was no fun in taking him on singly, because he knew too many tricks for us.

We rode on a couple of buffaloes that sometimes came to drink and wallow in the more muddy parts of the stream. Buffaloes are fine, sluggish creatures, always in search of a soft, slushy resting place. We would climb on their backs, kick, yell and urge them forward, but on no occasion did we succeed in getting them to carry us anywhere. If they got tired of our antics, they would merely roll over on their backs, taking us with them into a bed of muddy water.

Not that it mattered how muddy we got, because we had only to dive into the pool to get rid of it all. The buffaloes couldn't get to the pool because of its narrow outlet and the slippery rocks.

If it was possible for Anil and me to leave our homes at night, we would come to the pool for a swim by moonlight. We would often find Kamal there before us. He wasn't afraid of the dark or the surrounding forest, where there were panthers and jungle cats. We bathed silently at nights, because the stillness of the surrounding jungle seemed to discourage high spirits; but sometimes Kamal would sing—he had a clear, ringing voice—and we would float the red, long-fingered poinsettias downstream.

The pool was to be our principal meeting place during the coming months. It was not that we couldn't meet in town. But the pool was secret, known only to the three of us, and it gave us a feeling of conspiracy and adventure to meet there after school. It was at the pool that we made our plans, it was at the pool that we first spoke of the glacier; but several weeks and a few other exploits were to pass before that particular dream materialized.



JATAKA TALES



THE IMPERSONATOR

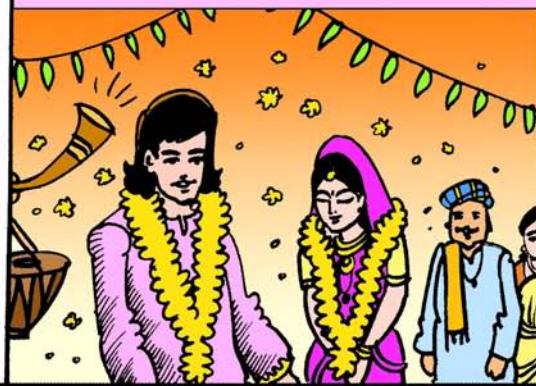
Gopinath read the letter. He was overjoyed to marry his daughter to the son of Somnath.



I feel so honoured to secure an alliance with your family. Your father has been very kind to me. I shall make arrangements for the wedding immediately.

In his joy in securing an alliance with one of the influential men in the country, Gopinath failed to verify Jeevan's credentials.

Jeevan and Gowri were married in a simple ceremony.



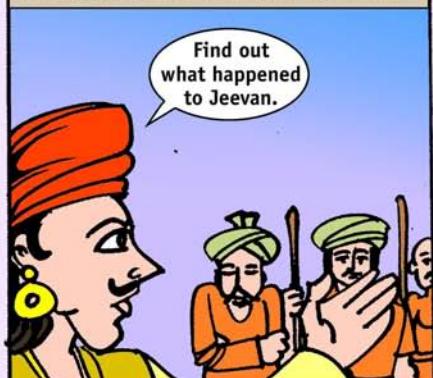
Jeevan delighted in his new role as master. He became overbearing and began finding fault with everybody.



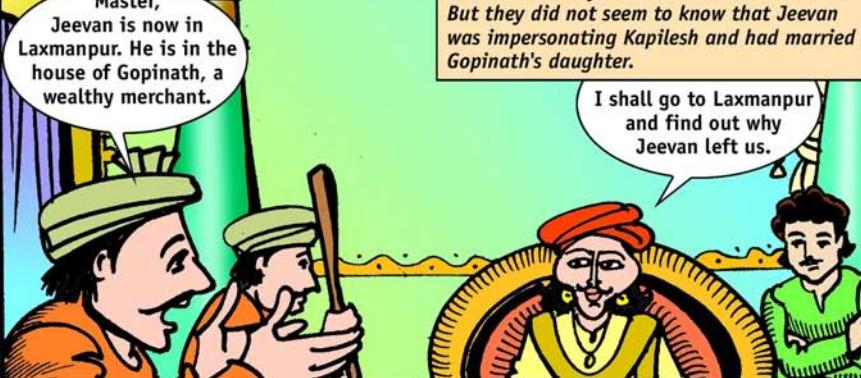
Meanwhile, back home, Kapilesh missed Jeevan terribly. Somnath also missed his servant.



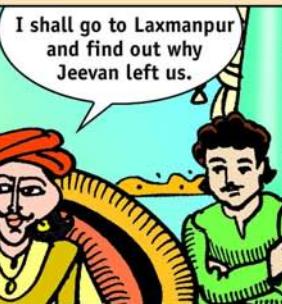
Somnath sent his men in search of Jeevan.



Master, Jeevan is now in Laxmanpur. He is in the house of Gopinath, a wealthy merchant.



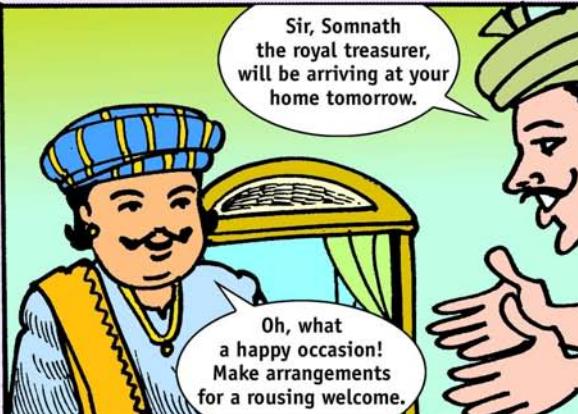
Somnath's men found out where Jeevan was. But they did not seem to know that Jeevan was impersonating Kapilesh and had married Gopinath's daughter.



Get things ready to leave for Laxmanpur tomorrow. Send news to Gopinath about my arrival.

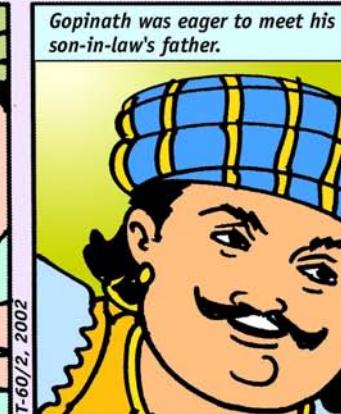


Sir, Somnath the royal treasurer, will be arriving at your home tomorrow.

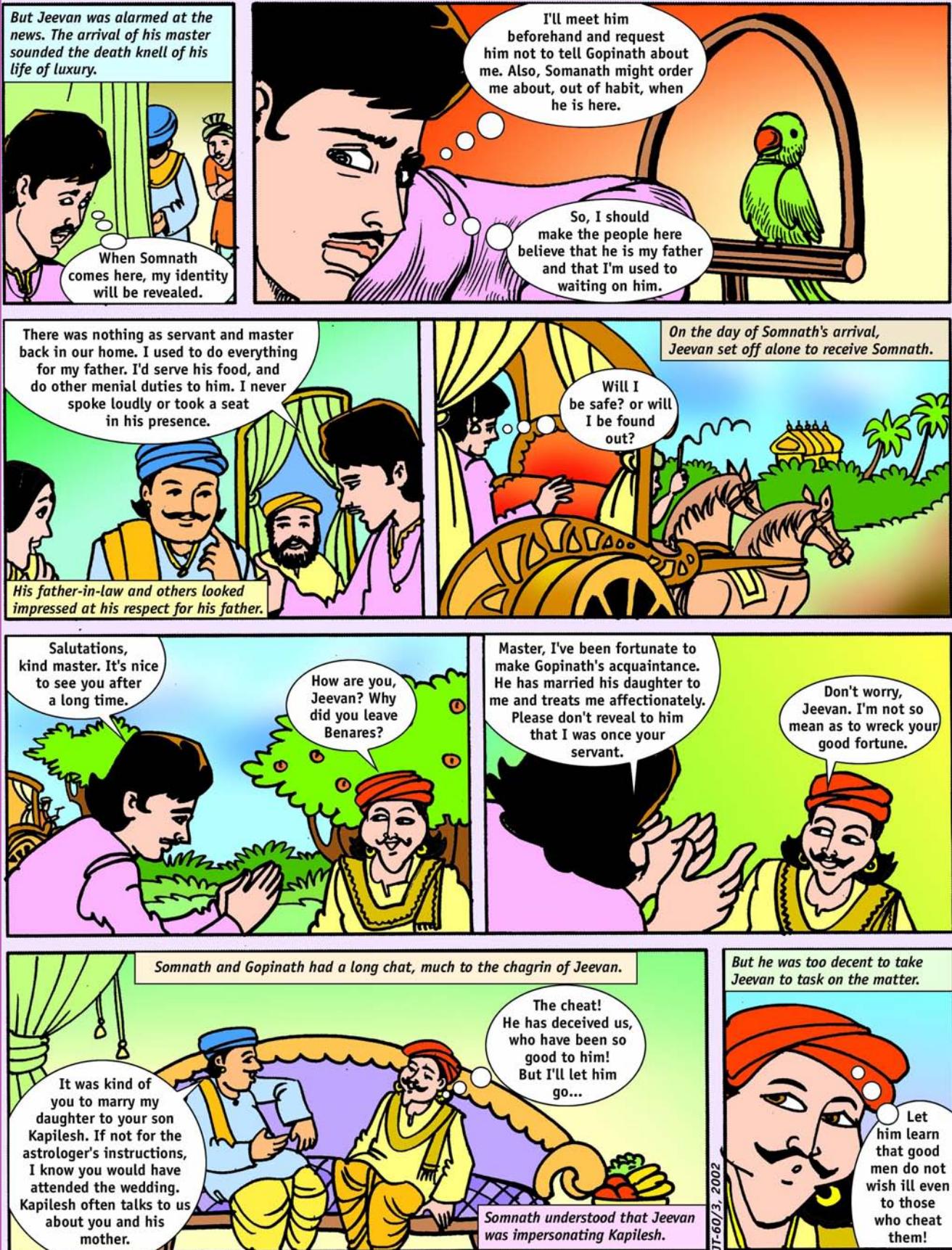


Gopinath was eager to meet his son-in-law's father.

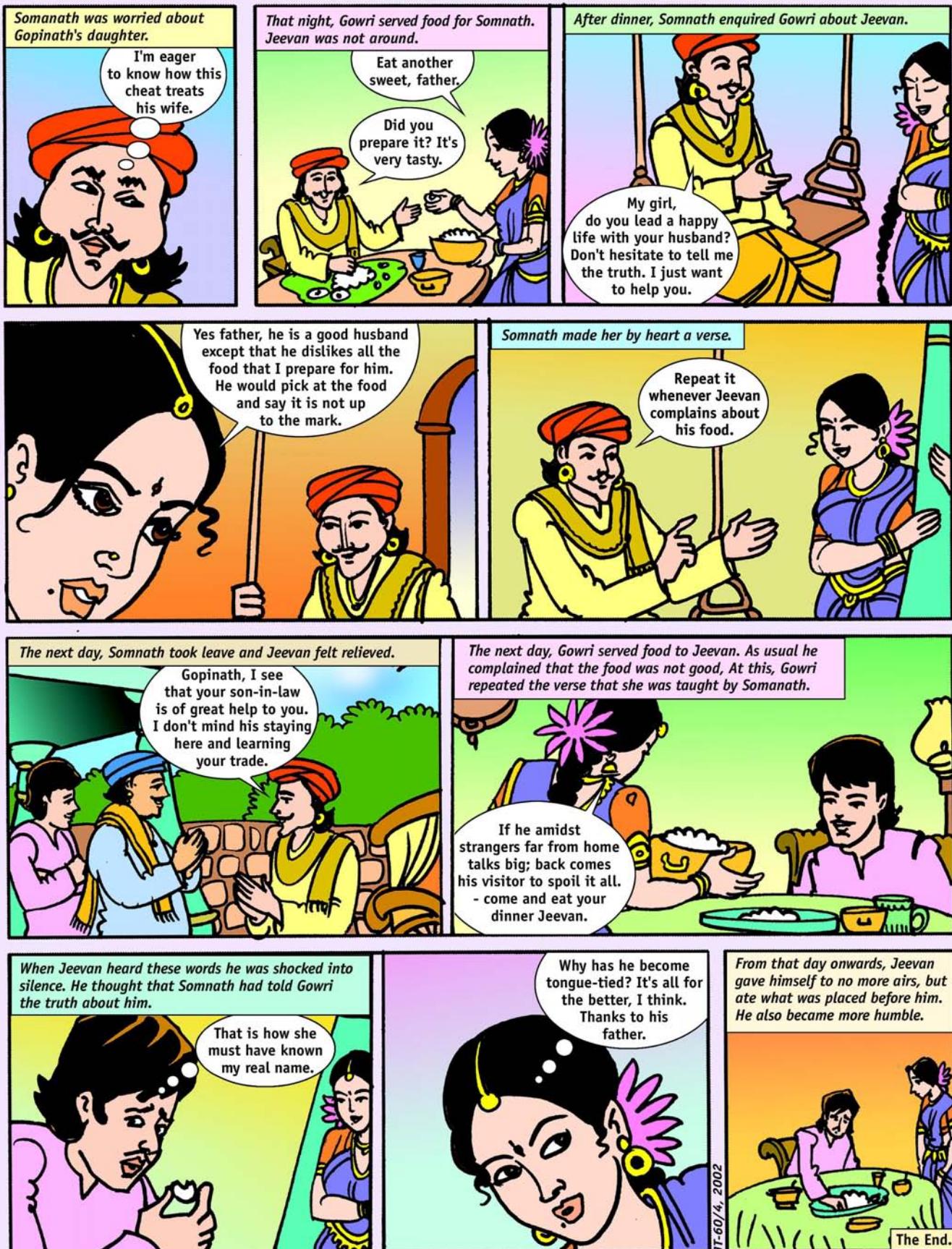
TT-60/2, 2002



JATAKA TALES



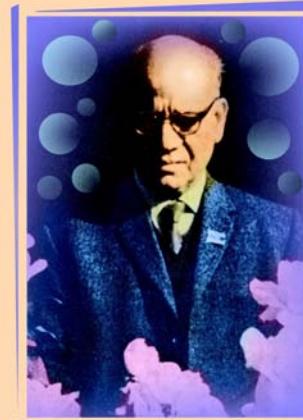
THE IMPERSONATOR



SCIENCE FAIR



- By Rosscone
Krishna Pillai



MAY-BORN: B.P. PAL

Benjamin Pyare Pal, doyen among the agricultural scientists who spear-headed India's Green Revolution in the late sixties, was born on May 26, 1906 in a Hindu family at Mukundpur in Punjab. His father's keen interest in rearing flowering plants and shrubs got instilled in Benjamin from childhood. Pal had his education in Rangoon (now Yangon) in Burma (now Myanmar). He won several prizes and scholarships before getting the B.Sc. (Hons.) degree in 1928. Next year he joined Cambridge University and after four years of devoted research on wheat, won his Ph.D. in 1932.

After his return, he was appointed Economic Botanist at the Imperial Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa in Bihar (which was subsequently shifted to New Delhi and renamed the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, now popularly known as the Pusa Institute). Soon he was promoted as Imperial Economic Botanist and Head of the I.A.R.I.'s Division of Botany. In 1950, when he was just 44, he became its Director, a position he held for 15 years; then he was appointed the first Director General of the newly-formed Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the umbrella body under which function all the research institutes in the country dealing with agricultural and allied sciences including fisheries.

It must be said to the eternal credit of Dr. Pal that his pioneering contributions in agricultural research, especially on wheat, helped save our country from famine and raise it almost to the world's pinnacle in terms of production and area in the growth of several major food crops.

It was on the initiative of Dr. Pal that the I.A.R.I. in 1954 launched the Wheat Improvement Programme mainly directed to evolving varieties of the foodgrain, equally disease-resistant and high-yielding. Dr. Pal, after several years of dedicated work during which he bred quite a few wheat varieties, developed a high-yielding variety named New Pusa (or NP)-809, which could resist all three types of the fungal disease called rust. This signal achievement of Dr. Pal gave succour to the wheat growers and was acclaimed by the scientific community across the globe.

Dr. Pal's guidance and enterprise inspired teams of scientists to undertake unremitting work which led to pathbreaking results in increasing productivity and production of various major Indian food crops besides wheat several-fold and came to be reckoned as the Green Revolution. He groomed a large number of reputed agricultural scientists.

Dr. Pal had a passion for ornamental plants; he wrote many treatises including those on wheat, roses and flowering shrubs. He received a number of honours and awards, like the Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Memorial Prize, Birbal Sahni Medal, Srinivasa Ramanujan Medal and Aryabhatta Medal, and honorary doctorates from several universities. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (F.R.S.) in 1972. The President of India awarded him Padma Vibhushan in 1987.

MRO SPACECRAFT IN MARS ORBIT

The spacecraft, Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, launched on August 12 (see Chandamama, October 2005 issue) last year has, at the end of its 568-million kilometre journey, successfully entered into a perfect, elongated 35-hour orbital trajectory around the red planet nudged by its gravity, on March 10. The news of NASA's targeted completion of the delicate orbital insertion manoeuvre, exactly as scheduled, raised waves of joy and excitement among its controllers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, U.S.A. The 27-minute orbital insertion burn slowed the MRO's speed to about 17,700 km per hour and swung it around Mars at an altitude of about 420 km.

The spacecraft using hundreds of guided dips into the Martian atmosphere slowed itself and reshaped its orbit into a circular, 2-hour loop at an altitude of 321 km. The orbital insertion posed one of the most difficult challenges to the MRO team; of the many spacecraft sent to Mars earlier, only 65 per cent achieved orbit. The six instruments in the orbiter, including the most powerful telescopic camera ever sent to another planet, will enable it to study the Martian surface in greater detail than ever before and send back more data than all the previous Mars missions combined. The finding by the instruments about the possible existence of water in any state on the planet can lead to further evidence as to whether Mars had ever supported life.



EINSTEIN THE 'UNKNOWN'

Albert Einstein never cared about his dress. One day, when he was about to go to his office, his wife asked him to dress properly. He said in response, "Why should I? Everyone knows me there," and left for his office.

On another day, he was about to leave for his first big conference. Then, too, his wife told him to dress well. Pat came his reply: "Why should I? No one knows me there."



"The great moral teachers of humanity were, in a way, artistic geniuses in the art of living." -Einstein

SCIENCE QUIZ

1. Which solar planet has the largest and highest volcano, named Olympus Mons, that is five times larger than the biggest volcano on Earth?
a. Venus; b. Jupiter; c. Saturn; d. Mars.
2. Which two parts of the human body do the ligaments join?
a. cartilage and bone; b. muscle and bone;
c. muscle and muscle; d. bone and bone.
3. If the Earth suddenly shrinks to half of its present radius, what will be the acceleration due to gravity?
a. 2 g; b. g/2; c. 4 g; d. g/4.
4. Which of the following is the largest gland in the human body?
a. salivary gland; b. liver; c. parotid gland; d. pituitary gland.



Answer: 1. d. Mars, 2. d. bone and bone,
3. c. 4 g, 4. b. liver



THE DAUGHTER

A tributary of river Narmada, Revathi, flowed through the kingdom of Rajpur, where Rajendra Singh was the ruler. He was without a child for a long time. He and queen Ahilyabai undertook frequent pilgrimages to the Durga temples which dotted the countryside. Soon, the queen was expecting a baby.

Rajpur was, around that time, experiencing intense drought. Rains had failed for one or two years; river Revathi, which was the main source of water, had dried up and the people had to trek long distances to fetch water from Narmada for their daily needs. The drought conditions led to near famine and the king had to permit his subjects to leave the kingdom.

It was in such a disturbed state that the queen gave birth to a pretty looking baby girl. Rajendra Singh did not want any celebrations in the palace. He went round the temples offering worship and praying for an end to the famine, so that his subjects could come back. In the temple dedicated to Shakti, his prayers seemed to have been heard by the divine mother. The king heard a voice: "Son, go and offer worship to my sister Narmada who will grant you your wish!"

On his return to the palace, he told Ahilyabai of what the goddess told him. The queen expressed her desire to offer worship to the river. The Raj Jyotishi set a date for their journey to the river.

The king and queen started in two palanquins. There was no large entourage to accompany them, except the king's personal attendant, the queen's maid, a priest and the palanquin-bearers. They left the palace well before dawn so as not to attract the notice of the inmates of the palace or the few householders in their route.

They reached Narmada as the first rays of sun fell on the earth. The king and queen waited till the priest and the king's attendant made a makeshift *homakund*. As he began the simple rituals and chantings, the priest asked the king and queen to get into the river and pray. Ahilyabai handed the baby to her maid and followed the king into the river. They stood waist deep in water and prayed with ardent devotion.

It did not take long before the goddess of the river appeared before them. "I'm pleased with your devotion. Give up your daughter to me and the kingdom will be saved from drought and famine and you will soon be blessed with another child—a son. Your daughter will be looked after well." The goddess then disappeared.

The king and queen were at their wit's end. They had been blessed with a child after years of pilgrimages and prayers. How could they give up a gift that had come from the divine? "My lord, let's go back and consult our Rajguru," said Ahilyabai, after coming out of the river.

"No, my queen, we shall not give an opportunity to anybody to go against the wishes of the goddess, though he or she may mean well for



OF A RIVER

us," said Rajendra Singh. "We must obey her command. After all, didn't she promise the boon of a son? Moreover, our people are to get a greater boon when there will be rains and there will no longer be famine. We've to suppress our sorrow and abide by the goddess's wishes."

Wonder of wonders, as they were consoling themselves, a basket came floating down the river as if it was sent by the goddess. Rajendra Singh and Ahilyabai stepped into the river and the king placed the infant in the basket. They watched the basket float by for sometime before they waded back and went up to where their palanquins waited for them. With great difficulty, Ahilyabai controlled her tears. Her maid helped her to get into the palanquin. The king's palanquin followed from behind. The priest and the king's attendant formed the rear of the small procession.

Before the sun had set that day, thunderclouds formed in the horizon, and there was torrential rain in the kingdom for the next few days. Many of the people returned to their homes. The parched land was soon ready for cultivation, and the people looked forward to an end to famine. The king and queen had full faith in the divine to take care of their baby.

Dhan Singh was a Rajput chieftain of Amritpur, which lay in the valley not far away from the fort city of Mandu. The river Narmada flowed through the forest on the north of Amritpur. Frequently Dhan Singh would take long walks



in the forest and go and sit by the river enjoying the cool breeze. He had hardly sat on his favourite rock when he espied a basket floating down the river. When it came near where he was sitting, he thought he heard a baby's cries. He left the rock, got into the river and was shocked to see a baby inside the basket. He took the baby in his hands when, surprisingly, it stopped crying. To his dismay, he saw the basket floating away leaving him to wonder whether it had contained any message or indication about the identity of the baby.

He hurried back to his mansion where a small crowd of curious attendants gathered around him. At that time Dhan Singh had not been married, but there were a few maids in his employ. He handed the baby to an elderly maid. The next few days, he spent his time contemplating how he would rear the baby girl. She was very pretty looking and so he gave her the name Roopmati. As she grew up, she developed a golden voice and Dhan Singh engaged musicians and artistes of repute from the neighbouring kingdoms to teach her music and dance.

Mandu was a part of the vast Mughal empire. Akbar had appointed one of his courtiers, Baaz Bahadur, as the governor. He used to visit the places around Mandu where the Mughals held sway. He thus came to Amritpur and Dhan Singh received him with all courtesy and honour. He had come to know of the governor's love for music and so, at his instance, Roopmati sang for him. Baaz Bahadur sat enraptured listening to her music.

He was also captivated by her beauty. So much so, he fell in love with Roopmati and his visits to Amritpur became frequent. During one of his visits, he found an opportunity to propose marriage, but Roopmati was too coy to give him a reply immediately. The governor thought it prudent not to insist on an answer, but their meetings continued. Roopmati did not forget the governor's proposal, but how could she agree to a marriage when there was so much social disparity between the governor and herself?

Baaz Bahadur soon realised that she was also in love



with him, but a gentleman that he was, he would never think of forcing an acceptance of his proposal.

At the same time he would profess his love for her. Roopmati now began to think of a way out of the predicament. One day, when Baaz Bahadur reminded her of his proposal, she told him, 'I'm the daughter of Narmada and I must bathe in the sacred river, if not every day, at least on all auspicious days. How then can I leave Amritpur for a place like Mandu which is far away from

the river?' She then went on to impose a near impossible condition. 'If the course of the river is changed to flow through Mandu, then I shall certainly marry you and come to reside in Mandu.'

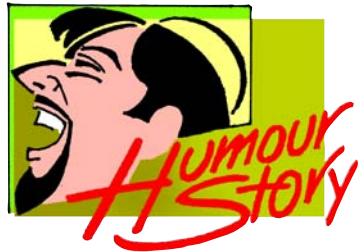
His love for Roopmati was so intense that Baaz Bahadur decided to take up the challenge thrown in by her. He walked up to the river, alone and an axe in hand. He searched for a place where he could cut open a tributary if not divert the wide river itself. He had hardly hit the ground once when the goddess of the river rose

before him and said, 'I'm satisfied with the sincerity of your love for my daughter. Go back to your palace where a sacred tamarind tree grows in the southern corner of the garden. Dig beneath the tree and you will come upon a spring of clear water. It is a part of me. Make a pond, so, when you take Roopmati to Mandu, she will not be parted from me!' The goddess then disappeared.

Baaz Bahadur promptly went back to his palace in Mandu, searched out the tamarind tree and began digging in all earnestness. When the ground broke and a spring hit his face, he knew that his union with Roopmati was now only a matter of days. He had a beautiful lake formed around the spring. He called it Riwa Kund, as Riwa or Reva was one of the names of Narmada. A swimming pool for Roopmati was constructed beside the lake, to which fresh water from the lake was let in every day.

Now, Baaz Bahadur formally approached Roopmati's foster father for her hand. Dhan Singh was only too happy to give his consent. After the wedding, Roopmati accompanied Baaz Bahadur to Mandu where the couple spent a carefree life filled with music and songs. Unfortunately their happiness was short-lived. The emperor found that his governor had neglected the administration in Mandu. He took over the administration into his hands. Baaz Bahadur and Roopmati could not escape a tragic end.

Which is more powerful?



The courtiers arrived at the gates of the royal palace much before the time set by the Caliph for the grand audience. Some of them arrived on foot. A few young courtiers rode the finest of donkeys in the land to reach the royal palace. The old, who were rich too, chose to drive down in carts.

All of them looked a little unsure. Why had the Caliph sent for them? They were sure that he had something important in mind. Perhaps he had a problem on hand; and he wanted to consult them. Or he just wanted to meet them all and ask them how things were. Or he had wanted to check if they were doing the tasks allotted to them well, to see that they were not taking things easy. But none could guess why the meeting had been called for. What was the problem he would pose? Each one wished he would be the first to come up with the right answer. That would not only please the Caliph, but fetch the courtier rich rewards.

If only wishes were horses!

The guards bowed to the courtiers, as they trooped in. Junior officials led the courtiers to the central hall where the Caliph usually met them. The roof of the spacious hall was covered by works of art, executed by the leading artists of the land. A huge chandelier, hooked to the roof, held a hundred candles. The floor was covered with thick carpets. The floral designs on the carpet matched the setting of the hall.

The officials guided the courtiers to the specific seats allotted to each one of them. The senior courtiers occupied the front rung of the seats, facing the royal seat. The other courtiers filled up the seats at the rear.

The Caliph's throne stood on a raised platform. Two steps led from the floor to the platform.,

Soon almost every seat in the hall was occupied. Only two seats were vacant, one of the Caliph and the other of Mulla Nasruddin.

Where was the Mulla? Why hadn't he come? A few

courtiers had their eyes at the entrance to the hall. They were friends of Mulla Nasruddin. They wondered what held Nasruddin back. They did not know. They hoped against hope that he came before the Caliph took his seat. They hoped the Caliph would be delayed and would turn up only after Mulla Nasruddin took his seat. .

They were really worried. The Caliph was like quicksilver. His mood changed very quickly. Most of the time, he remained happy and cheerful, shared jokes with the courtiers and laughed heartily. But there were occasions when he flew into a rage, shouted and screamed and





raved like mad at people for real or imaginary offences. Not turning up in time for the royal audience was a major crime. If the Mulla didn't turn up in time, he might face the wrath of the Caliph. What would then happen to him? Would he be expelled from the court? Would he be put behind bars? Anything was possible. Mulla Nasruddin's friends fidgeted in their seats.

However, Mulla Nasruddin's enemies (and he had quite a few at the royal court), were happy. One of them whispered in the ears of the courtier who sat by his side and was his close associate, "Nasruddin will get it on the neck today, for sure."

"He deserves it," said the other courtier, a smile between his lips.

"I know. He thinks he is too clever. Far too clever! He never misses a chance to tell us that we are dimwits when compared to him. He is proud. He is arrogant. All because he thinks he alone knows how to wriggle out of difficult situations. But I don't think his cleverness will help him even a wee little bit if he turns up at the court after the Caliph has taken his place," said the first courtier.

They hoped that the Mulla would be late. But their hopes died soon. Almost at the last moment, Mulla Nasruddin walked in. His friends sighed in relief. His enemies groaned, in dismay. He bowed to the courtiers

and said, in a loud voice, "Salaam alai kum," while taking his seat.

"Alai kum salaam," most of the courtiers responded.

The court official announced the arrival of the Caliph. The courtiers stood up. They bowed as the Caliph walked along the aisle, holding his head high, accepting the homage of the courtiers. He walked up the steps leading to the throne, smiled at the courtiers and took his seat.

The courtiers waited for the Caliph to start the proceedings.

"Oh Noble Sires, I am glad that all of you have turned up. This is a rare occasion. I know all of you are intelligent. But who among you is the most intelligent? I've decided to hold a test. One who comes up with the right answer to my question gets the prize. Know how much is the prize money? One thousand *Shekels*."

The Caliph ran his eyes over the courtiers.

The courtiers looked at each other. A thousand Shekels! That was quite a sum. Each one hoped that he would get it. They sat on edges, waiting for the Caliph to set down the test.

The Caliph leaned forward slightly, placed his arms on the cushioned armrests and cleared his throat. Then he said, "Oh Noble Sires, we have a number of heavenly objects." He paused for a while.

A slight rumble ran through the court. The Caliph waited till silence was restored. "Among these objects are the sun and the moon."

The courtiers nodded their heads. They wondered what the sun and the moon had to do with the contest. Everyone was curious. But none dared ask the Caliph to spell out the test quickly. That was not the done thing. They waited for the Caliph to share with them what he had in mind.

"Well," the Caliph sighed, before adding, "last night, I could not get a wink of sleep. I was about to drop off to sleep when the Begum Saheba asked me which of the two heavenly objects, the sun and the moon, is more

powerful and why. I didn't know the answer. I tried to tell her not to ask silly questions. But she won't listen. She said she must have the answer right away. I had a tough time telling her I would find out and give her the answer within twenty-four hours." The Caliph paused for a second and then looked at the courtiers, "I am sure you learned men will have the answer. One who gives me the best answer gets the prize and the honour too."

The courtiers sat bolt upright in their seats.

"Your turn first," the Caliph signalled to the oldest among the courtiers.

The man shuffled to his feet, stood up, bowed and said, "Huzoor, the sun is far more powerful than the moon. The sun is the source of all energy. Not the moon," the man sat down, after bowing once again to the Caliph.

"We agree," said the Caliph.

Then came the turn of other courtiers. One said the sun was so powerful that none dared look at the sun. Yet even a coward had no fears when it came to looking at the moon. Another courtier said none dared to walk out when the sun blazed during the hot summer days. But almost everyone walked out into the moonlight and never once feared of being struck down by the heat.

So it went on till at last there were only two courtiers who had to give their views. One was Firaq and the other Mulla Nasruddin.

The Caliph turned to Firaq. He had enough time to work out his reply while the other courtiers gave their replies. He stood up, bowed and said, "Huzoor, the sun never changes its shape. It always remains a circular disc. Not so the moon. Sometimes, it is bright and resembles a golden circular plate. But it doesn't retain this form. The very next day, it starts to wane. It looks like a circular bun off which

someone had taken a bite. It loses a bit, every day till one day nothing is left of it. Then it appears, again, first like a sickle, then gathering more arcs and still more arcs, day after day, till it regains the shape of a full disc. If the moon had enough power, would it ever allow such changes to happen?"

"Well, I see some logic in that," the Caliph sounded pleased.

Firaq bowed and resumed his seat. Everyone had declared the sun more powerful than the moon. But Firaq alone had given a very convincing reply. That feeling lifted his spirits. He felt sure of himself. He believed that Mulla Nasruddin would not have much to add. "The prize is mine," said Firaq to himself.

There he went wrong. Mulla Nasruddin got up, paid his obeisance to the Caliph and then said, "Huzoor, I must seek the pardon of my peers here. I'm sorry I can't agree with them. In my view, it is the moon, not the sun that is really powerful."

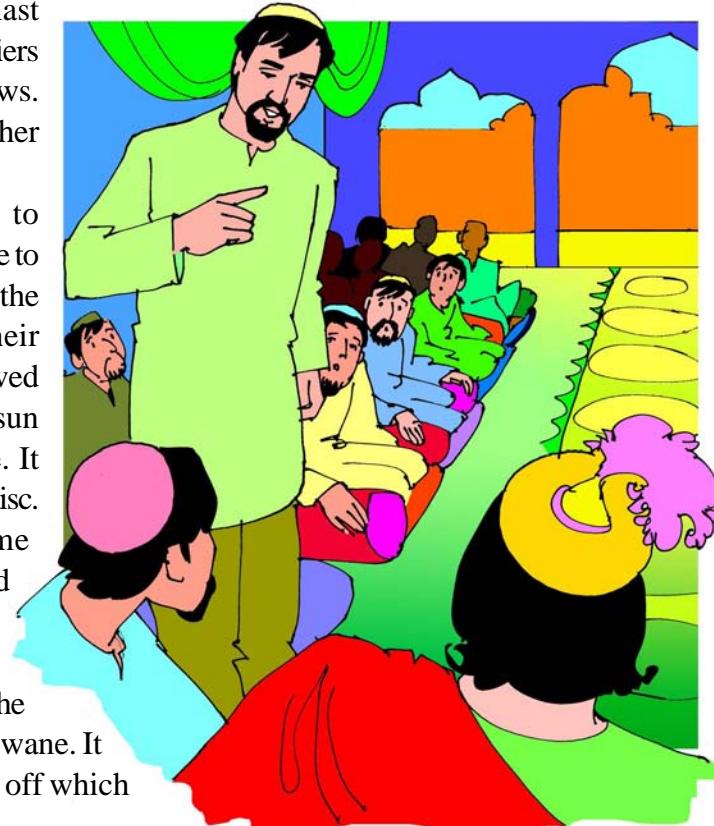
"But why?" the Caliph found the Mulla's statement a little hard to accept.

"Huzoor, I have only this to say. The sun shines during the day. Day is the time when there is enough light around.

But at night, when darkness fills up every space and it is impossible to make out anything, it is the moon that sends beams of cool light and drives darkness out. The stars wink and blink. But they never provide enough light at night. The moon alone has the strength to hold back darkness. So, I, for one, think the moon and not the sun is really powerful.

The Caliph found Nasruddin's reply highly intelligent. That day, when Mulla Nasruddin walked home, he was richer by a thousand Shekels.

- R.K.Murthi



LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

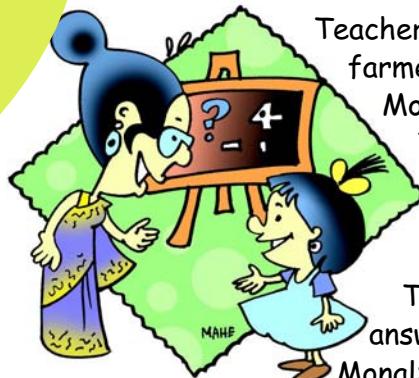
I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body.

- Winston Bennett,
University of Kentucky
basketball forward.

Madhan: I can stay under water for ten minutes.

Somu: Impossible.

Madhan got a bucket of water and put it on his head.



Teacher: "Four crows are on the fence. The farmer shoots one. How many are left?"
Monal: "None."

Teacher: "Can you explain?"

Monal: "When one is shot, the others fly away. There is none left."

Teacher: "Well, that isn't the correct answer, but I like the way you think"
Monal: "Teacher, can I ask a question?"

Teacher: "Sure." Monal: "There are three women at the ice-cream parlour. One is with a baby girl, one is alone eating the ice-cream and one is with her father. Which one is married?"

Teacher: "The one who has a baby."

Monal: "No. The one with the wedding ring on, but I like the way you think."

"It's clear," said the teacher, "that you haven't studied your geography. What's your excuse?"

"Well, my Dad says the world is changing every day. So I decided to wait until it settles down!"



DUSHTU DATTU



THE GHOST OF VEERABAHU



Veerabahu was a poor farmer who led a peaceful life with his wife Jamuna and son Raghu in an interior village called Pandharipur. The villagers would often remark that Raghu very much resembled his father in looks.

One day, Veerabahu set out for his field early morning as usual. In the next few hours, he was brought back dead. The other farmers informed his family that he was bitten by a cobra and had died instantly. Both Jamuna and Raghu were literally paralysed with shock at this most tragic incident.

Jamuna soon went hysterical. It was with great difficulty that the neighbouring women managed to console her. For several days, she would wake up suddenly from her sleep and scream wildly, "I saw my husband! He came to me!" Her neighbours started whispering among themselves whether the ghost of Veerabahu was tormenting her.

After a few months, something strange happened in the village. A trader who had returned late at night was found unconscious near the cremation ground. When the villagers brought him back to consciousness, he muttered

with a pale face: "Last night, when I was nearing the cremation ground, I saw the ghost of Veerabahu clothed in white. The ghost asked me to part with my money in order to meet the financial needs of his family who were struggling to make a living in his absence. The ghost then took away my money bag."

The villagers, who were already suspicious of the existence of Veerabahu's ghost, believed in what he said and searched the house of Jamuna for the stolen money bag. But they could not find anything. Jamuna was pained to know that her husband, who was a very good man when alive, had turned a robber after becoming a ghost. At the same time, she was intrigued why the ghost had not given her what he took from the trader.

The villagers, however, were convinced that the ghost of Veerabahu must have done this mean act only at the instance of Jamuna and as a result, they began despising her.

After a few days, a newly married couple was accosted by the ghost at night and the woman was robbed of her ornaments. The ghost loudly proclaimed to them that it was able to gift Jamuna



with gold ornaments at least as a ghost, which it could not do when alive. The agitated villagers searched Jamuna's house again but could not find the stolen property. They suspected that she must have hidden them somewhere. After a few more such incidents, the village chief ordered Jamuna and Raghu to leave the village so that the ghost would follow them, too. It was the only way to stop the robberies and to let the others live peacefully.

Jamuna was aghast on hearing the orders of the chief. She had never gone out of her village so far. Nor did she have any relatives in other places to give asylum to her. Further, she did not want to leave the village without proving that she was not an accomplice to the robberies that have taken place till then. It suddenly occurred to her that her husband might be innocent after all. Being an honest man when alive, he would not resort to robbery after his death. So, she

requested the chief to allow her to stay for a few more days in the village. Then she ventured to go to the cremation ground alone to find out the truth herself.

When she reached the place at midnight, she saw a figure dressed in white sitting on the branches of a banyan tree. It jumped down on seeing her and shouted, "Hand over your belongings to me! I'm the ghost of Veerabahu!"

Immediately, she found out that it was not her husband's voice at all and that some unscrupulous fellow was acting as the ghost of Veerabahu. She took to her heels and reached her house. She explained everything to her son. Then the two of them hatched a plan to catch the imposter red-handed.

The next day, Jamuna explained to the village chief what happened the previous night and sought his help to carry out her plan. Accordingly, the chief collected a handful of villagers, and

accompanied Jamuna to the cremation ground in the late evening hours. Then they hid themselves behind the bushes. Raghu dressed himself in white, climbed the banyan tree and hid himself among the branches. They were all waiting with bated breath for the arrival of the real culprit.

And he did arrive when it was quite dark. As he approached the banyan tree, a figure dressed in white pounced on him and shouted, "Rascal! Who are you? You've been cheating the villagers all along and robbing them posing as Veerabahu's ghost! See for yourself! I'm the actual ghost of Veerabahu! I shall now slit your throat and drink your blood unless you confess the truth."

The imposter was terrified. He fell at the ghost's feet and cried, "Forgive me! Hereafter I won't do this!"

The ghost would not let him off. "Give me back everything you've robbed so far! Then only I'll leave you!"

The criminal immediately dug out from underneath the tree whatever he had robbed and handed them over to the ghost. At once, the chief and the others came out of their hideout and grabbed the man. They were about to

congratulate Raghu for impersonating as a ghost, but he was not to be seen.

When they were wondering where he had gone, Raghu climbed down from the tree. "Sorry! I dozed off. So I could not get down at the appropriate time. I woke up only after I heard your voices."

All the others were dismayed to hear that. If it was not Raghu, who else could have jumped down from the tree at the right time and threatened the criminal? Who was it then? It took sometime for them to realize that it was the real ghost of Veerabahu itself which had appeared before them. What could have prompted the ghost to make a sudden appearance when it was least expected? They thought that the ghost could not tolerate someone wantonly tarnishing its name and hence made a dramatic visit to set things right.

The village chief, along with the other villagers profusely apologised to Jamuna for accusing her, and requested her and her son not to leave the village. Jamuna heaved a sigh of relief that the innocence of both her husband and herself had been proved at last.

Nobody could see the ghost of Veerabahu thereafter.



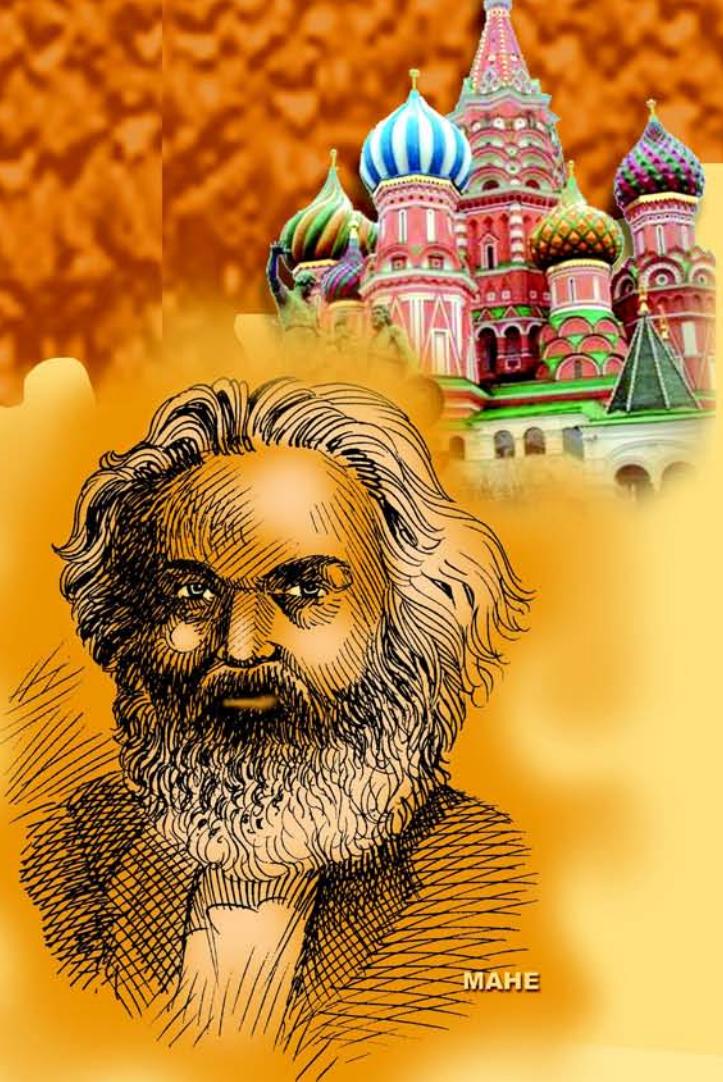


MAY DAY

May is a word that carries with it an element of uncertainty, hints at a possibility, nothing more. Yet it sheds this uncertainty when it gets linked with May that is the fifth month in the Julian calendar. The month knows it has a life span of thirty-one days. Not a day more. Not a day less. It asserts itself from Day One, which is also called May Day.

May First is the day that the workers in all parts of the globe celebrate as their own. It is of great significance to them. So they hail it as the day of their liberation from the days when they were treated like beasts of burden. Even children, we know when we read the novels of Charles Dickens, used to be put to work in 18th century England for sixteen hours a day. The working class enjoyed no leisure. They were paid low wages. Hardly enough to give them even the basic comforts. They were mostly ill fed, ill housed and ill kempt, hardly had any skills, and were mostly illiterate. Most of them worked from the age of five. They never got a chance to enjoy life's amusing or inspiring moments. They were born into drudgery. They worked and worked till they could work no more. Then they were thrown out, left to beg for a living till death. They enjoyed no pensions, no bonus, and no gratuity. These are benefits that workers in the organised sector enjoy today.

How did this change come about? Who was the architect of this change? Then we recollect Karl Marx (1818-83). He was a philosopher turned economist who was born in Germany. He studied the condition of the working class. He felt angry at the denial of basic needs to the working class. He called upon the working class to rise against the oppression. He recorded his ideas in



his book *Das Kapital*, which he wrote in 1867 after he settled down in England in 1849.

His ideas eddied around. Some of the workers who were educated began to dream about a society where the workers would get the wages they deserved. They discussed ways and means of making the dream come true.

Ideas know no barriers. The ideas that Karl Marx presented crossed the Atlantic. They reached the United States where, too, the working class was denied fair wages. The working hours were long; the work environment was not congenial; it was often unhealthy. The terms of employment were akin to what we know as bonded labour in our country.

The ideas of Karl Marx fired the imagination of a few workers in Chicago. They discussed among themselves various options. They held secret meetings with fellow workers. The workers at factories were

working unduly long hours. Limit the work time to eight hours a day, demanded the workers. In 1884, the American Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions demanded an eight-hour workday, to come into effect as of May 1, 1886. The men who owned the factories would not agree. The profits the factories earned would dwindle if the workers were to be paid full wages for just eight hours of work. The management turned down the demands. The workers decided to go on a strike on May 1, 1886. The workers took to the streets. They went round shouting slogans, repeating their demands. Soon the crowd got unruly.

Policemen rushed to restore order. They pushed the striking workers back. They charged with batons. A few workers were injured. Then the unexpected happened. Someone in the crowd threw a bomb at the cops. It was then pell-mell for some time. The police went on the rampage. The crowd dispersed, unable to withstand the batons. The police rounded up a few leaders of the workers. Among them were Fisher, Engel, Spice and Parsons. The four were identified as those responsible for hurling the bomb. That was enough to earn them the death sentence. They were hanged.

The movement, however, did not die down. It gained fresh momentum. The four men who had died on the gallows became heroes of the working class. Soon the eight-hour workday was accepted.

Now May First, renamed as May Day, is observed as Labour Day in most countries around the world, including the United Kingdom.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led to the overthrow of the Tsars. Russia became a Communist country. Russia accepted May Day as symbolic of the final triumph of the working class. Officially proclaimed and endorsed by the Soviet Union, it is also celebrated as the Day of the International Solidarity of Workers,

especially in some Communist countries.

The Day is celebrated with great pomp and show in Moscow. The May Day parade at the Red Square is not a wee bit less important than our own Republic Day. The top rungs of leaders watch the parade. Heads of other nations often are guests of honour at the Parade. Tanks roll out to the band of military music. Soldiers march past with the precision of robots. Flags flutter on posts defining the contours of the Red Square. Thousands of people gather to witness the grand show. Other Communist nations, too, celebrate May Day fittingly.

Nobody gives any thought to the fact that May Day got first linked with labour force way back in the 1880s in the United States. That is one credit that the United States, too, seems happy to go without. In fact, very few people in the U.S.A. now want to remember that May Day had its fiery beginnings in Chicago. The events of 1886, they say, should best be forgotten. The bloody events of 1886, they say, brought no credit to the progressive image of the nation.

The U.S.A. now celebrates Labor Day on the first Monday of September. May Day, in the United States, is known as Loyalty Day.

- R.K. Murthi





TEACHING MARATHON

Dr. Annayya Ramesh is a Lecturer in the Applied Botany department of the University of Mangalore. He has created a record by taking a class non-stop for 98 hours 33 minutes. He began his lecture on March 22 at 9 a.m. and ended it on 26th at 11.30 a.m. Mr. Narayan Sivasankar, hailing from Andhra Pradesh, is the present record-holder with a timing of 72 hours 9 minutes. Mr. Musowasi, a teacher from an African country, took a class for 88 hours 4 minutes. His record is still awaiting an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Dr. Ramesh (34) took his M.Sc. from Mysore University and also got his Ph.D. His mother has been a teacher.



INDIAN WOMAN ASTRONAUT

Thirty-five year old S. Vanajah Sivasubramaniam, of Indian origin, is an engineer by profession settled down in Malaysia. She is one of the four candidates shortlisted for training in space travel and a stay in the International Space Station (ISS) next year. Along with three others—all men from that country—she is now on her way to Moscow for medical and technical tests with the Russian Space Agency.

RAMAYANA FESTIVAL

Come June—the 17th to be exact—and the Bali island of Indonesia will have a month-long Ramayana Festival. Many countries where the great Indian epic is popular and adapted or translated versions are in vogue, have been invited to the first ever International Ramayana Festival. The Festival is a pet idea of the Governor of Bali, Dewa Beratha. Doesn't the name sound like Bharata?



KALEIDOSCOPE

MY PET

I had a friend, Deepti. She had a pet dog. It was an alsatian. His name was Moti. Moti, Deepti and I were very good friends. We used to play together.

Sometimes I would feel that I should also have a pet dog, but my mother might not allow me to keep one.

One day, I wanted to give my mother a special gift as her birthday was near.

So, I went with my friends to the shop. While returning, on the way a train was about to pass, and so the railway gate was closed.

On the track a small dog was playing and it was not at all aware of the train approaching. I could see the engine at a distance, and I felt sorry for the cute dog. I crossed the gate and took the puppy away to safety.

I took him home and gave him milk. I thought the puppy would go away, but it went up to the door and waited.

I knew my mother wouldn't allow me to keep it at home. But she took pity on the pup it and allowed it to be my pet. I named it Winy.

Winy and Moti and Deepti and I then became very close friends.

- Ketaki (11), Bangalore

May 2006



WANT TO BE MYSELF

I am different in myself
Why don't they understand
I can do anything I want
With my own faithful hand.

Why can't I be myself?
Why can't they allow me to live my very own life?
Everyone sees themselves in me
And ignores my joys and strife.

To my family and friends I'd love to tell
That I just want to live life my way
They don't even know my thoughts and feelings
Maybe they'll know them some day.

I wish they would know
What I think, feel and do
For then they'll let me be me
And you yourself be you.

- Aakriti Pasricha(12), New Delhi

A FRIEND

A friend is a treasure
Who enters in our life
Specially created by god
A friend is a gift of time.

A friend is the one
With whom I can share
A friend is the one
Without whom life is bare.

A true friend is rare
But if once found
A true friend spreads love
Spreads happiness all around.

A true friend
Makes it feel between you
That this thought
Is really true.

- Tanisha Nag (12), New Delhi



KALEIDOSCOPE

KALEIDOSCOPE

KALEIDOSCOPE

KALEIDOSCOPE

KALEIDOSCOPE



Mother : Mona, tell me, why is a bear's body covered with hair?

Mona : Mother, that's because there's no barber in the forest.

- **Bharati (10), Avadi**

"Mother, we're going to play 'elephant in the zoo'. Will you help us?"

"Well, what do you want me to do?"

"You'll be the lady who gives them fruits and sweets."



* * *

Ravi : You've a good collection of books, but you should have more shelves to keep the books in order.

Shyam : I know, but I can't borrow shelves.

- **Manjushree B.L. (14), Chitradurga**



Teacher (to Mohan's parents) : Mohan nearly got twenty slaps today. But I managed to

save him.

Parents : Really? How?

Teacher : I controlled myself.

- **G.S. Anush (11), Sohar**



Teacher : What is the outermost part of the tree trunk called?

Student : I don't know, Ma'am.

Teacher : Bark, boy, bark.

Student : Woof! Woof!!

- **N.Saiprashanth (9), Dharwad**



Chintu : Mummy, I've decided not to learn history.

Mummy : Why?

Chintu : I've learnt a new motto today.

Mother : What's it?

Chintu : It is, 'Let bygones be bygones'.

- **Faizan Yamin (10), Delhi**

A village doctor (trying to wean the villagers away from alcohol) :

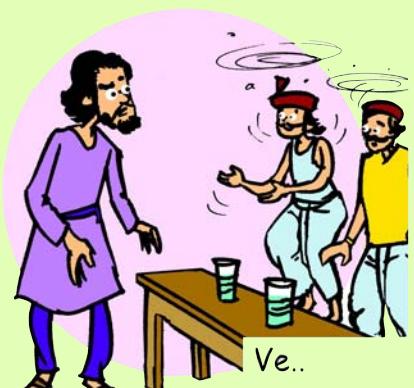
Friends, I'll show you an experiment; I shall put one

earthworm in water and another one in clear water. (After a while, the earthworm in water is alive, while the other one dies.)

Now what do you understand?

Villager : If we drink alcohol, then the worms in our stomach will die.

- **K. Jaideep (14), Alike**



RIDDLES

1. What is the opposite of minimum?

2. When it is working, it has no cap; when it is at rest it has a cap. What is it?



3. They are two neighbours, but can't see each other. Who are they?

4. What goes up, but never comes down?

5. The longer she stands, the shorter it grows. Who is she?

6. I never ask questions, but I get my answers. Who am I?

- C. Yashwant (11), Sullurpetta



7. Name a phrase which has a lot of letters.



8. Which mouse has two legs?

- Monalisa Panda (12), Delhi



9. Why should you never say a secret in a cornfield?

10. What is the difference between electricity and lightning?

11. How can you lift an elephant with one hand?

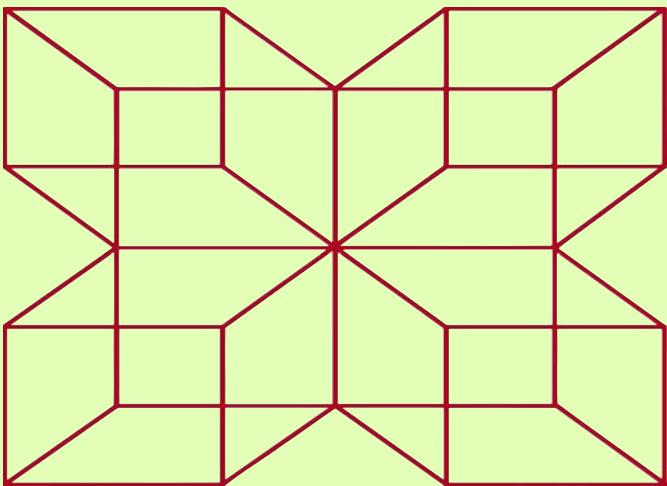
12. Why is history the sweetest subject?

- G.S.Anush (11), Sohar



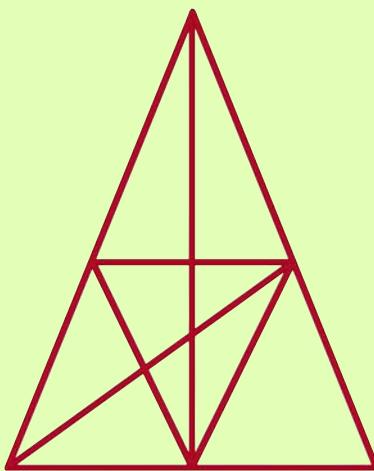
PUZZLES

1. How many quadrilaterals and cubes can you count in the above diagram?



- Aliv Hasan (10), Kharagpur

2. How many triangles are there in this figure?



3. Can you add eight 8s to arrive at 1,000?

- C. Yashwant (11), Sullurpetta

Because it is full dates!

11. There is no elephant with only one hand, 12.

7. Post office, 8. Mickey Mouse, 9. Because corn has ears!, 10. You don't have to pay for lightning,

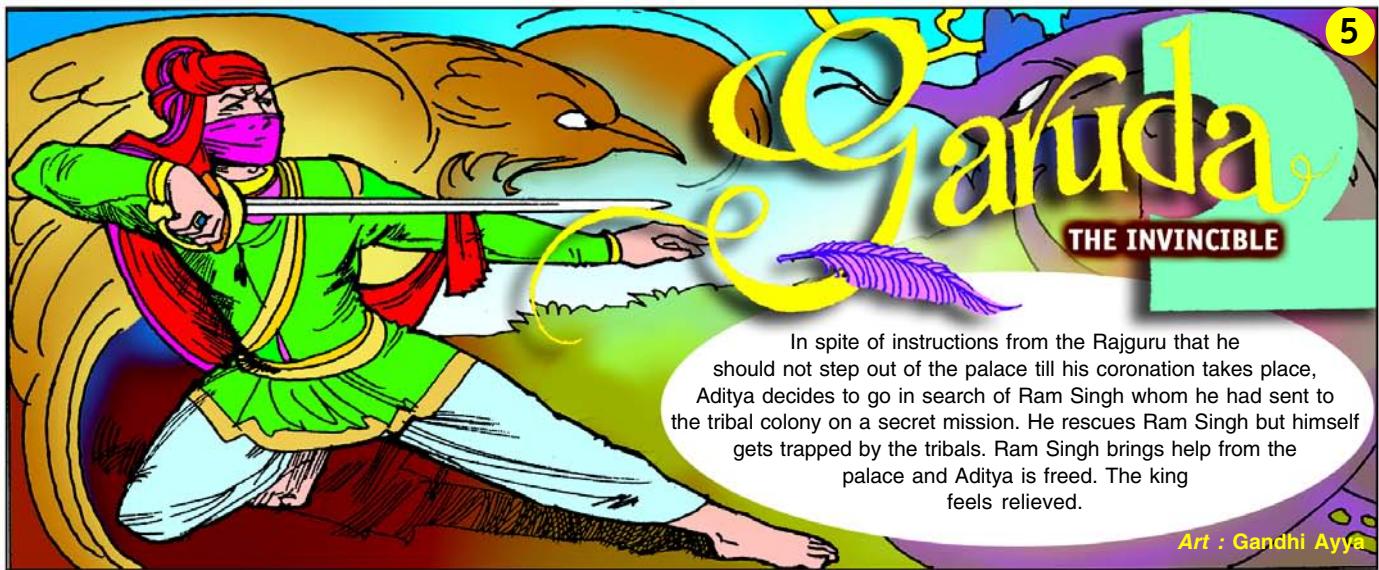
3. Eyes, 4. Age, 5. A candle, 6. Letter,

RIDDLES : 1. Mini-dad, 2. Writing pen,

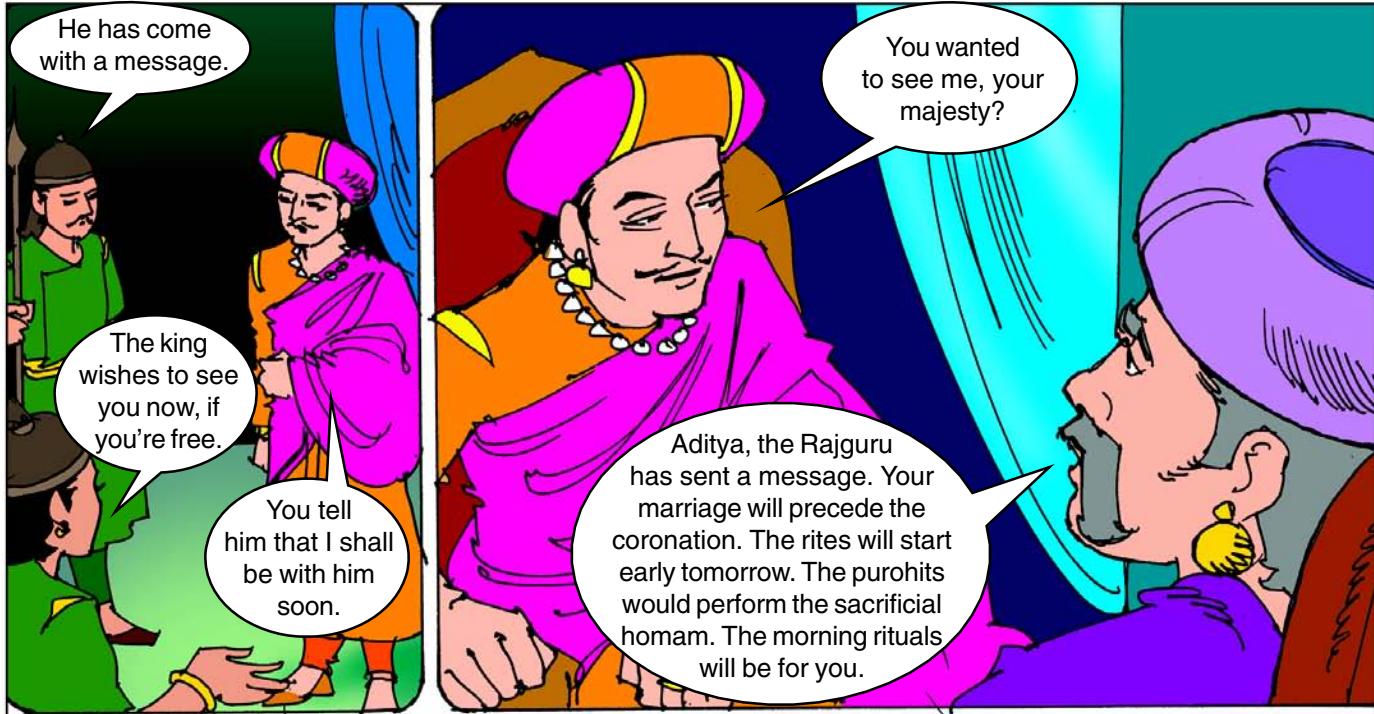
2. 47 triangles; 3. $888+88+8+8+8=1000$.

PUZZLES : 1. Quadrilateral - 33; Cube - 4.

ANSWERS:







Aditya suddenly wakes up. He looks around.

I seem to have acquired some extra power!

He gets up and stands before the portrait of the former Prime Minister.

Garuda will always guard you, my son.

I need your blessings, father!

Just remember this. All your actions should be guided by one thought, that whatever you do will be for the welfare of the people. May you prove worthy of the Chandra dynasty you belong to. May you succeed in your new role!

I shall always remember that, father!

Now, who's coming?

To continue



BITTER PILL

Jairam was a poor farmer in a small village. He lost his wife soon after a son was born to him. He named him Mohan and brought him up with all care and affection. But Mohan turned a careless and irresponsible boy right from his childhood. He stopped going to school and roamed the village all the time in the company of vagabonds.

Jairam tried his best to bring him back to the correct path by various means. But his efforts only failed. Many a time, Jairam would beat his son and threaten him with dire consequences, but such measures only proved counter-productive. The harsh punishments given by Jairam made Mohan develop bitter feelings against his father.

He started revolting and accusing his father of having no affection at all towards his son. He even threatened that he would run away from home if his father continued scolding him or punishing him.

Years passed. Mohan was now a grown-up man. But he continued to be irresponsible and

hostile towards his father. Jairam thought that marriage might make him responsible; with that fond hope, he married him to a girl of the same village. Matters only grew worse. One day, Mohan went up to his father and said, "Give me my share of property! I want to set up a separate home with my wife."

Jairam was shocked on hearing his son's demand. "My son, don't ever talk like that! Nothing will be more painful to me in my old age than parting with you. I want you and your wife to stay with me for ever in this house. I love you so much that I can't think of your going away from me!"

But Jairam's pleading did not cut any ice with Mohan. "Father, whom are you trying to fool? You never had any love for me! Right from my childhood days, you have only scolded me and beaten me! Do you want me now to believe that you are pained to part with me? Rather, you would be happy to part with me as I shall be to go away from you."

Jairam's pleadings only fell on deaf ears.

Finally, Jairam had to give Mohan his share of the property. Mohan left his old father and settled in another village with his wife.

There he started doing some business and somehow managed to make both ends meet by his own efforts. Mohan's wife gave birth to a son. Many years passed.

History seemed to repeat itself. It was now Mohan's turn to get annoyed with his son, Gopal, who had started leading a reckless life. Mohan grew extremely anxious at the callous attitude of his son. First, he tried to change his attitude with kind words. When that did not work, he started admonishing him.

One day, in sheer desperation, he slapped him hard. It was enough to provoke his son to run away from home. He took refuge in his grandfather's house.

In the mean time Mohan, who was terribly upset, started searching for Gopal everywhere. He came to his father's house, too.

Cleverly hiding Gopal, Jairam acted as if he was not aware of the boy running away from home. He deliberately teased Mohan, "Don't worry! Treat it as good riddance. What's the use of keeping an irresponsible son at home? Let him suffer!"

Mohan was somewhat taken aback by the

remarks of his father. He wondered how the old man could speak such unkind words instead of sharing the sorrow with him. When Mohan went back home without his son, his wife's sorrow and anger knew no bounds. She screamed at him. "You're responsible for my son leaving home. Go and find him or else don't enter the house!"

Poor Mohan was at his wit's end, when to his great surprise he saw his father coming in with Gopal. Mohan and wife were happy to see Gopal and hugged him affectionately.

Then Jairam spoke: "Mohan! Do you now realize how it hurts you when you find your son totally irresponsible? Imagine how I would have felt when you behaved in the same way when you were young. When my kind words did not help, I too resorted to punishing you. It was no doubt a bitter pill, but it was meant to reform you. But you mistook it for want of affection on my part. You suffered terrific mental anguish when your own son ran away. Imagine my plight when you chose to part from me. Do you realize a father's love at least now?"

Mohan fell at his father's feet and asked for his pardon. "Father, I now understand everything. I shall come back with my wife and son and we shall live together in our old village house."



A KING RETURNS HOME

In Chola country, there was a small kingdom called Mangalapuram which was ruled by Rajaratnam. He was a vassal of the emperor and paid his tribute promptly and regularly and so the kingdom enjoyed a peaceful reign. The region was fertile, giving a good yield year after year making the people happy and prosperous. The taxes they paid to the treasury went on increasing the royal wealth.

Rajaratnam was a kind-hearted ruler and he was generous in distributing his wealth, whether it was for a peasant's family which had suffered a sudden bereavement or for a trader who would have met with some unforeseen setbacks in business. The king equally

patronised craftsmen, painters and poets encouraging them to visit other countries, learn new crafts and arts and come back and tell him of the prosperity and glory of the places they visited.

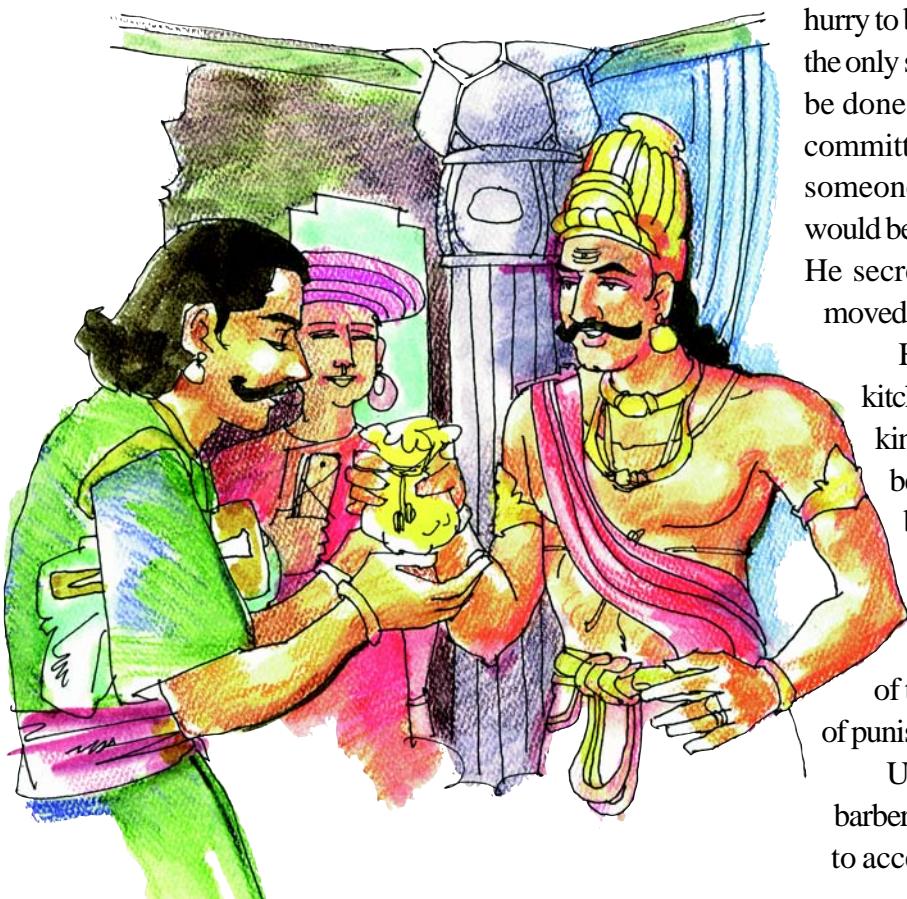
The king's brother Maniratnam was not very happy the way money from the royal treasury was being spent on unproductive excercises. He felt that the money was only going to enrich the pockets of the numerous beneficiaries who did not bring back anything to swell the treasury. His actual worry was, there might be nothing much left in the treasury by the time he ascended the throne on the death of his brother.

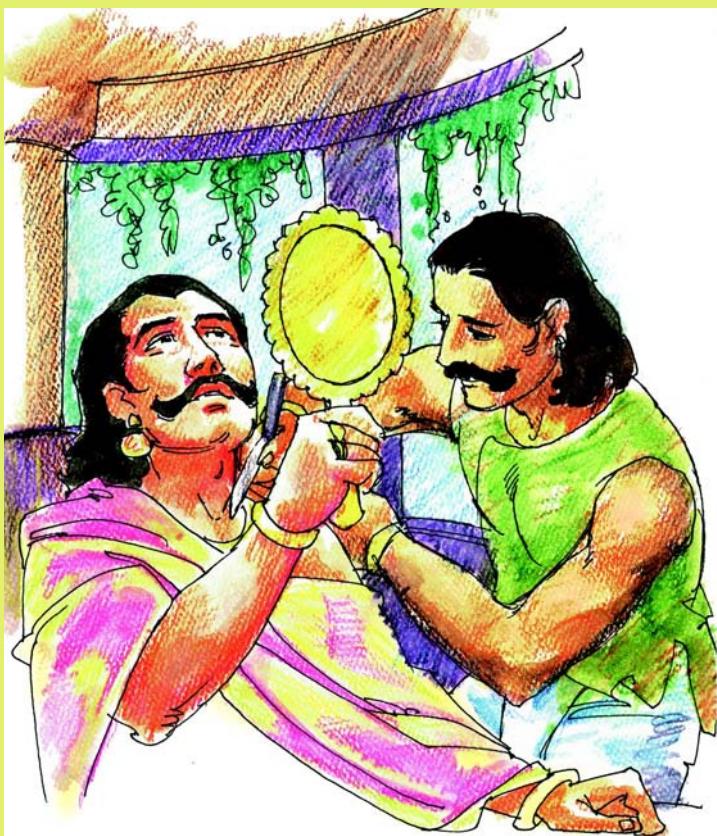
As days went by, Maniratnam appeared to be in a hurry to become king. He thought his brother was the only stumbling block and, therefore, he should be done away with. But he did not want to be committing a crime himself. So, he should find someone to do the job for him, someone who would be willing to do it for money or for favours. He secretly mooted the idea with those who moved closely with the king.

He talked to the chief cook of the royal kitchen, but he reminded Maniratnam that the king never ate alone and there would always be guests at dinner time. No, he would not be able to poison the king's food.

Suppose the poison affected others as well? He would be caught and put to death. Maniratnam now talked to some of the attendants, but they were also scared of punishment in case they failed in their attempt.

Ultimately, Maniratnam made the king's barber agree to his proposal, though he declined to accept any cash reward for such a heinous





act. What he did was, while he was giving a shave to the king next morning, he revealed the plot to the king. Rajaratnam fell silent for a while and then expressed his gratitude to the barber, who later confided in some of his friends among the attendants. He then came to realise that they, too, had wished to remain loyal to the king and refused all enticements from Maniratnam.

In no time the entire court was aware of the plot to assassinate King Rajaratnam. He, however, had a surprise for them. He announced his abdication in favour of his brother. "I'm fed up with governing and I feel I should go to the forest and meditate for some years. My brother, Maniratnam, will rule the kingdom on my behalf." Some of the courtiers pleaded with him not to do anything foolish. He told them, "Perhaps a life in the forest will prove how foolish I've been all through my life."

He sent for his brother and in the presence of the courtiers, he handed the crown to Maniratnam, without any ceremony or fanfare.

He left for the forest the very next day.

Now, everybody knew how nasty and unfair Maniratnam had been to his brother. Even otherwise, he had not endeared himself to the people. They all waited,

wondering what his next step would be. Maniratnam was happy for the first few days, though he could not find a smile on the face of any of the courtiers, or even the attendants. But they went about their chores, carrying out the orders of their new king. Maniratnam thought it wise to confine himself to the palace and not go out and face the people.

The grim look on the face of the people around him gave him a fear that just as he had plotted against his brother, someone must be plotting to kill him and bring back Rajaratnam. So, he decided that the only way he could remain alive was to make sure that his brother was not alive, though Rajaratnam continued to be away in the forest, spending his time in meditation and refusing to meet anybody from the palace or the court. Maniratnam offered half the kingdom to anyone who would oblige him, but no one came forward to accept the offer. Who would want to become a ruler and get embroiled in cheap conspiracies? None was willing to help Maniratnam.

One day, a poor poet came to the court. In fact, ever since Rajaratnam went away to the forest, Mangalapuram had not had any opportunity to listen to well-known or up-and-coming poets. This poet, however, made a beeline to the court and asked for the king's



permission to read out his epic poem. When the king was told that the theme was the history of the kingdom and not anything in praise of him, he said, "I don't want to listen to your poetic work. Instead, if you can go to the forest, kill my brother, and bring me his head, you can have half of my kingdom!"

The poet did not want to remain in the court for a moment longer. He hurried to the forest, though for a different purpose. He met Rajaratnam and told him about his meeting with the king. He reminded the ex-king how he used to patronise poets and painters, and how he was disappointed when the new king did not evince any keenness to listen to his epic on Mangalapuram.

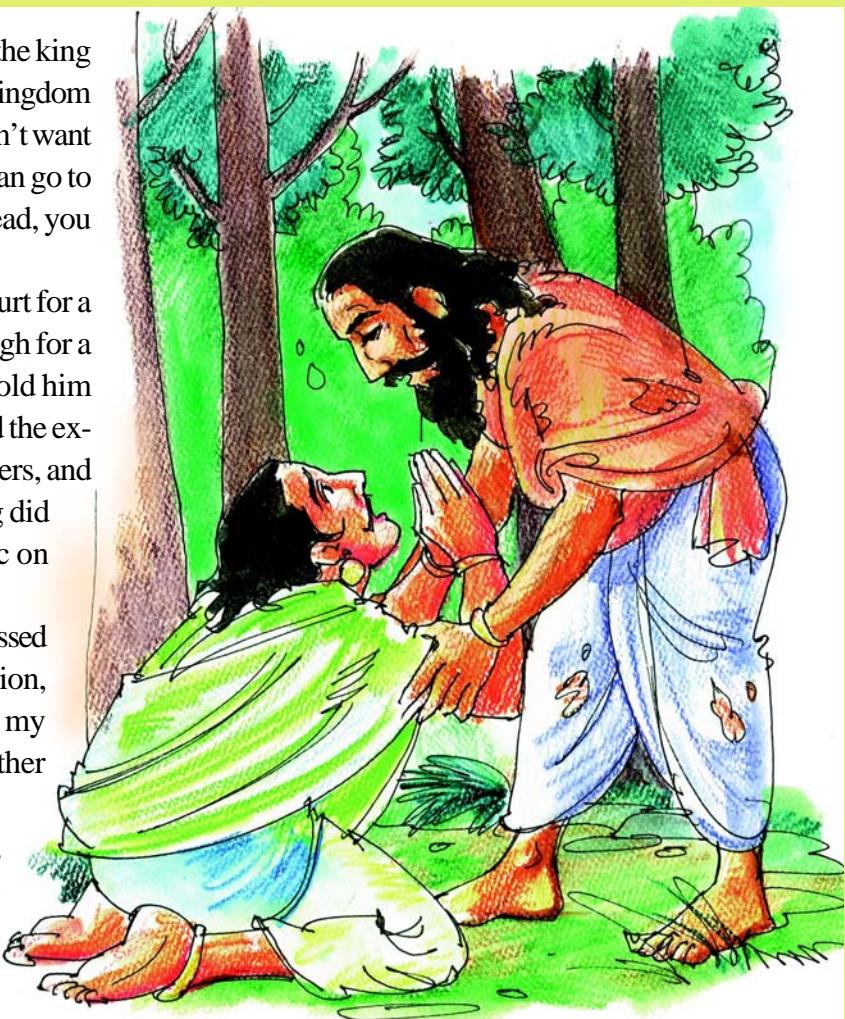
Rajaratnam expressed his sorrow and confessed his inability to help him under his then condition, "But, you can do one thing, my friend. Here's my sword. Cut my head and present it to my brother and claim your reward of half-a-kingdom."

The poet was horrified. "How can I do that, sire? Even if my family and I were to starve to death, I won't commit such a sacrilege! Please forgive me!"

He went home, wrote out a poem on his meeting with Rajaratnam, and send it to Maniratnam. He concluded the poem thus: *The headless Mangalapuram sought the precious head for a price. The head is willing to offer it up to save a poor poet, who has no hesitation to forsake his own head for the sake of the kingdom.*"

Maniratnam was now struck with remorse. There was nobody willing to do his bid and accept his magnanimous offers. At the same time his brother, instead of chastising him for his evil thoughts, was ready to sacrifice his life so that a poor poet could live happily for ever. He ordered his horse to be brought to the palace.

For the first time after he took over as king, Maniratnam rode out of the palace. His destination was the forest, but he went unarmed. As soon as he saw his brother, in unkempt clothes and wearing a beard, he fell at his feet and begged for pardon. "Brother, it was left to that poet to open my eyes. It was a foolhardy act of



mine to have made an attempt to have you killed when you were reigning. It was greater foolishness to have offered half of the kingdom that you gave me in return for your head. Please come with me to the palace and take back the kingdom. I'm not worthy of even continuing in Mangalapuram as a common man. Forgive me, please!"

Maniratnam requested his brother to ride the horse, while he sat behind him. There was the usual crowd at the palace gates waiting for a royal audience. Many were taken by surprise when they saw their beloved ruler ride into the palace. The cheers that arose from them alerted the people inside the palace and they all assembled at the courtyard to greet Rajaratnam.

Maniratnam led his brother to the court hall, where he handed back the crown to his brother and made him sit on the throne. He himself sat on the floor at the feet of King Rajaratnam. The courtiers were seen shedding tears of joy.

GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

One of them, who had not come quite close, retained a dim sight. He managed to return to the princes and report to them the predicament of the spies. They hurried into the valley to put an end to the strange infant. Unfortunately, they had not taken any precaution to protect their eyes, and the aura of the child attracted them. They gazed at the child. The next moment they found that they had turned blind.

They sat helpless in that forlorn valley and began to repent their senseless actions. Then they addressed the mother of the child and said, "Never, never shall we harm any of the Bhrigus. We will leave you in peace. Should you like to return to your homes, we will even escort you. But, please give us back our eye-sight."

The child's mother said: "It's not in my hands to cure you of your blindness. You came here with the intention

of killing my child. The power that protected the child has punished you. The barbarity with which you have acted has no parallel. Worse maybe your suffering in future unless you are pardoned by the child himself."

The humbled Haihayas knelt down before the child and expressed in many words their repentance for their misdeeds. Said the child, named Ouryu, "I've been given a certain power by the Divine Mother in order to punish you. If you are really repentant and are sure that you will not be repeating your follies, then pray to Her. So far as I am concerned, my anger has subsided."

The Haihayas did as advised by Ouryu. The Divine Mother pardoned them. They got back their sights.

As is well known, the Bharata dynasty began from King Bharata and so did the Yadava dynasty from King Yadu. How was the Haihaya dynasty founded? The legend runs like this!

One day Revanta, son of the Sun-God, went to meet Vishnu. He rode the excellent horse, Uchaishravas.

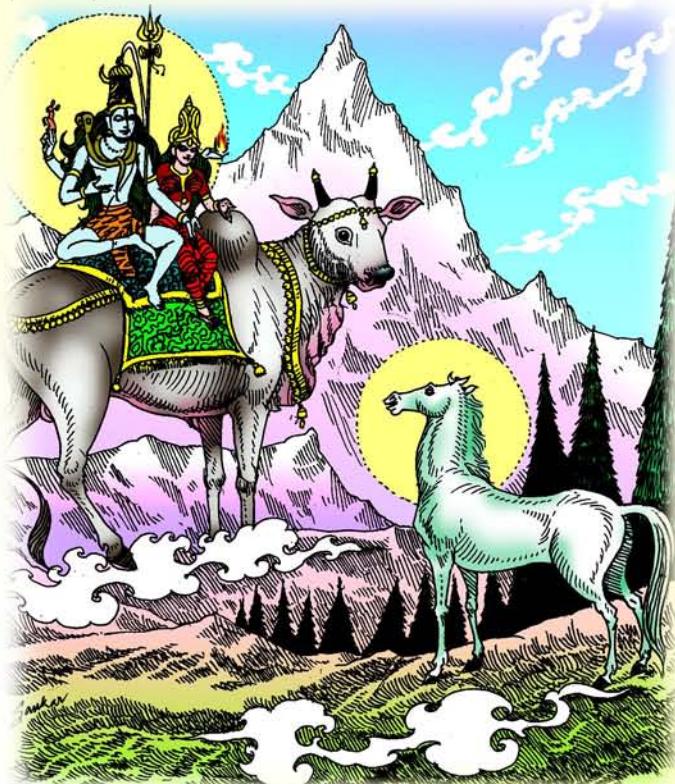
Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, saw the horse. It had emerged from the waters during the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons—as had Lakshmi Herself emerged.

Lakshmi naturally looked upon the horse as her brother. She kept gazing at it, moved by a feeling of affection.

That was the time when Lakshmi used to worship Vishnu. Observing that Lakshmi had forgotten Him for a moment, Vishnu said, "Do you know the consequence of your concentrating on the horse at this auspicious hour? You will be identified with her and an emanation of yours will go out and become a horse!"

Lakshmi came to her senses. "Is that inevitable?" she asked.

"What is wrong in that? Isn't the whole universe our



29. THE HAIHAYAAS HUMBLED

form?" Vishnu said and smiled. Soon an emanation of Lakshmi came down to the earth and got changed into a mare. She prayed to Lord Siva and wanted to get freedom from the present form.

"Do not worry, for, I'm sure, something unexpected will happen. Because Mother Lakshmi concentrated on Uchaishravas, an emanation of hers turned into a horse that you are. I can see that Vishnu, too, is deeply concentrated on you. Who knows if the same won't happen to Him? Have patience," said Siva. He then despatched Chitrarupa, one of his supernatural attendants, to Vishnu.

Chitrarupa arrived in Vaikuntha and told Vishnu, "I understand that Mother Lakshmi remains invisible. However, my Lord has met an emanation of Hers roaming about in the forest as a mare. Should it not be proper for an emanation of yours also to go into the forest, so that Lakshmi's emanation is not left alone?"

Vishnu, who was already engrossed in thoughts on Lakshmi, instantly sent an emanation of His to the earth—in the form of a horse.

The horse-couple lived in the forest for some time. In due course, a human child was born to them.

"We must now return to Vaikuntha," said Vishnu's emanation.

"How can I desert this newborn babe?" asked Lakshmi's emanation.

"You need not be attached to the child. It is so ordained that a prince called Turvasu is ardently aspiring to have a child. He shall come across this one. Its protection is assured," said Vishnu's emanation.

The emanations of Vishnu and Lakshmi departed to heaven, leaving behind a charming child in a forest on the banks of the river Tamasa.

The murmuring brook lulled the infant to sleep. Trees showered flowers on it. Birds chirped and whistled on joyously while circling over the child.

A Gundharva couple, Champak and Madalasa, happened to pass flying over the forest. Their eyes fell on the child. They descended and picked it up.

Motherly love welled in Madalasa. She kissed the child again and asked, "Who is this child? Who could have abandoned it here?"

Champak gazed at the child with great interest. He had no difficulty in realising that a child like that could not have been born of human parents.

"Who are this child's parents?" asked Madalasa.

"It is not possible for me to tell. Indra might be knowing," replied Champak.

(To continue)



THE HIDDEN DELIGHT IN NATURE

The quiet morning had grown quieter because the monsoon was approaching. As it is, the atmosphere of rural India, 150 years ago, used to be always calm and noiseless except for the chirping of birds, occasional moos of cows or barking of dogs and human voices here and there. There were no automobiles, microphones, radio or cinema houses.

A boy of six years was crossing the paddy fields beside his village. He loved the silence, the lush green fields and the trees looking as if aspiring for and expecting the rain. Indeed, chunks of clouds that had appeared in the sky were growing in size and spreading in all directions. In fact, they grew so fast that the entire sky was overcast in no time.

The boy stopped and kept looking at the vast sky touching the horizons. How magnificent nature is! he wondered. Before long, tender waves of cool breeze

caressed him and the murmur and rustling of the leaves sounded to him like sweet, subtle music.

Suddenly what added to his joy was a covey of milk-white cranes flying against the partly deep blue and partly dark clouds. What was joy for him now became an ecstasy. O God, how to absorb such a splendid scene! The boy marvelled at the clouds and the cranes, at the infinity and its grandeur – and went unconscious. He lay sprawled on the soft grass. Luckily some villagers who happened to pass by and who knew the boy to be someone very special, saw him and carried him home.

The boy was none other than Gadadhar of village Kamarpukur in Bengal who, in due course of time, became revered and renowned as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836 – 1886). The experience he had that morning is called Samadhi – a sublime kind of trance. One achieves that state of consciousness through Yoga. But for Gadadhar, it came spontaneously, from that morning, again and again. While in Samadhi, one experiences a state of bliss that no material or social success or fulfilment of fond desires can ever give.

Indeed, how much beauty and joy are there in the very sunrise, sunset, in a flower or in the stars or the clouds – only if we knew how to find them. True joy will be yours when, in the words of the celebrated poet William Blake (1757 – 1827), you are able

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.*

The life of Sri Ramakrishna and other mystics shows that this is possible. (M.D.)



LIGHT (OF FREEDOM) AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL



One afternoon during the Second World War, the most devastating conflict in human history, two young men leisurely strolled talking in soft low tones. They were making plans of escape from Stalag Luft III, the most securely built German prisoner-of-war camp. Set in a clearing of a sandy pine forest that stretched for more than 20 miles, this prison camp boasted to be escape-proof.

A 20-foot high double fence of barbed wire topped with razor-sharp spikes surrounded this notorious prison compound. At regular intervals along this strong barricade stood sentry boxes that rose above the fence.

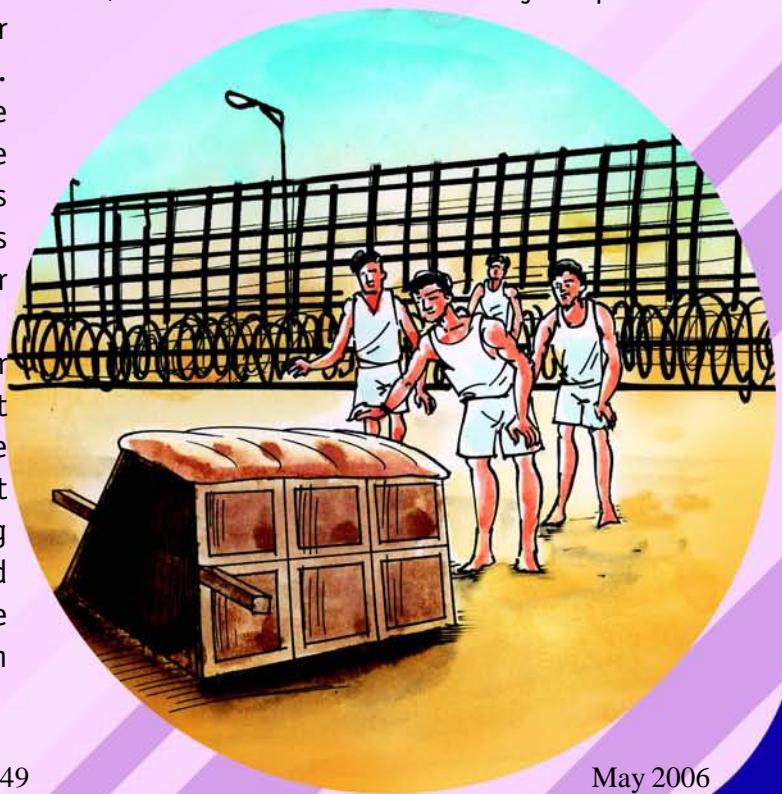
Each of these watch-towers was manned round the clock by a couple of goons or ferrets, as the German guards were known, equipped with machine guns. Fifteen feet inside the boundary ran a low single strand barbed wire, a foot above the ground. This was the trip-wire and any prisoner stepping over it was at once shot dead by the watchful sentries. At night the captives were locked up in stuffy little wooden barracks raised on piles three feet above the ground, huddled together. Powerful searchlights continuously swept the darkness off and ferocious dogs trained to pin down a man roamed waiting for their prey.

The Germans counted the Allied aircrew as their most prized prisoners and took great pains to prevent them from breaking out. But it did not dampen the spirit of the two brave adventurers. For that afternoon during their walk, the two English young men, Eric Williams and Michael Codner, had indeed made a plan. As required they presented the scheme to the secret Escape Committee of the prisoners which assured full support.

One fine morning some days later the doors of one of the wooden huts swung open and out marched a group of prisoners dressed only in shorts. Close behind them followed a box-like object about four feet high, padded at the top, slung between two poles and carried by four strong prisoners. They carefully placed it about thirty feet inside the trip-wire and withdrew the poles.

The guards looked with amazement at the unusual spectacle. They could never imagine from where came this wooden horse, how night after night, the two friends, Eric and Michael had crept out of their hut through the loosened floor board while someone in another barrack made some disturbance to divert the dogs away.

They managed to steal timber being used by the Germans for building purposes. Then with some tools, nails and available materials they had produced



this indigenous vaulting box remembering the legendary Trojan Horse.

"They are a crazy lot, these British people! What are they up to now?" wondered the inquisitive goons. While they wondered, the well built men in shorts lined up and began to vault over the horse under the direction of one of them who obviously was the captain of the team and seem to know something about the sport. The vaulting was good. The men successfully executed a series of intricate jumps and rolls. A curious crowd of amused prisoners had already gathered and they cheered the performers. The guards, too, seemed to enjoy watching this new form of exercise the prisoners had suddenly invented, unlike the monotonous walking and jogging along the trip-wire.

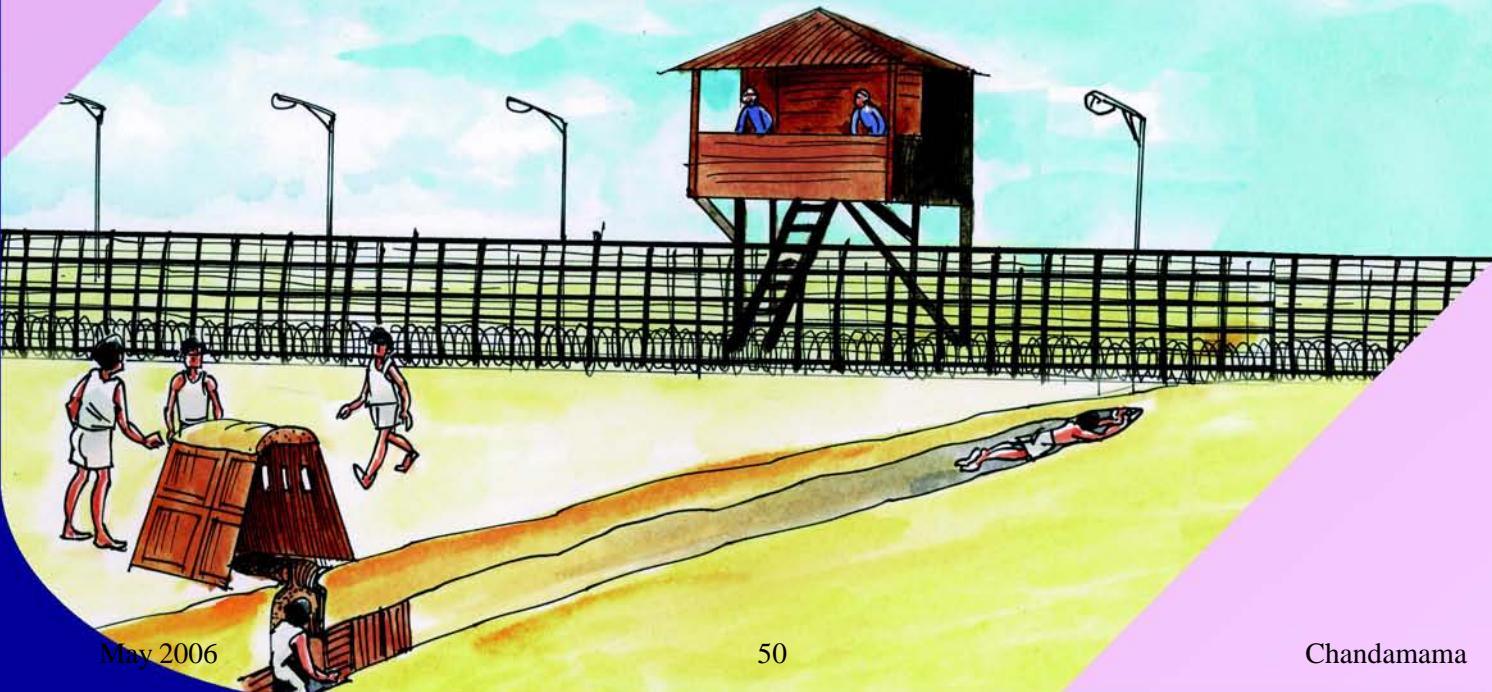
But one of the prisoners always failed to clear the box. He was clumsy and awkward in his approach sending the spectators into wild guffaws. The ferrets, too, laughed in their boxes and leaning on their elbows waited for him to attempt once again. But in spite of all the jeering, the fellow was not in the least discouraged. The more the onlookers laughed at him the more determined he appeared to clear the obstacle. With a deep breath he started his mad run and took a mighty jump. Alas, he missed his footing and lurched forward crashing into the horse.

This desperate onslaught knocked the box over on its side and the guards could see right inside it. It was empty and hollow.

The horse was made to stand up again and the men continued with their discipline for a while. Then they filed back to the barrack along with the box and put it away. But before leaving they tied pieces of cotton across the door and round the horse. The next day they found the strips of cotton torn. The Germans were taking no chances. During the night the guards had indeed examined the vaulting horse. With a smile the team of gymnasts carried it out for yet another spell of vigorous exercise. For a week they followed this routine. From time to time the box was knocked over to show the goons that nothing suspicious was going on inside it.

One day the four robust men carried the horse out. They seemed to stagger under its unusual weight. Yet they pretended as though it was very light and easy to handle. But actually it was not so. For inside the box, with his feet braced against its framework crouched Michael. Soon the vaulting started with the normal zest and vigour. Meanwhile the man hiding inside began to dig the great tunnel.

Michael worked fast. He first scraped up the dark grey sand from the surface and put it in a cardboard box. Then he started digging straight down into the



bright yellow sand underneath and put it into the bags made out of trouser legs. When he had finished for the day he put a sheet of wood over the hole and packed it with sand until it was level with the surrounding ground. Then he finished off by sprinkling the surface dust from the cardboard box and carefully levelled the area below the horse. Then getting up on the frame of the apparatus he hung the excavated bags of sand on the hooks fixed on the side and finally effaced his foot and finger marks and left no trace of disturbance on the surface.

"I am done for today," he then softly told Eric who was standing close to the box helping the enthusiastic gymnasts.

On a signal from the captain the men folded up their exercise. They inserted the poles and carried the horse back to the hut. It was heavier than usual with the weight of a man and those bags of sand. Once safe inside Michael thankfully crawled out with a deep sigh of relief. The sand was taken out and dispersed in various places where the goons would never dream of looking.

From then on Eric and Michael took it in turns to dig and by the time they had dug a tunnel of forty feet they had reached the limit of their endurance. The farther they tried to burrow through, the tougher became their work. They were almost taking two hours to fill up the twelve bags of sand. So twenty-four times in all every session each man had to crawl up to the end of the tunnel and then crawl backwards dragging the dugout sand. Once in the tunnel with his hands in front of him, he had to remain in that position and could not get his arms behind nor could he turn around. Not only were these two daring men exhausted but the gymnasts too who had been vaulting for two months now were worn out and had little energy to spare. Yet they were all determined to continue in their heroic attempt to tunnel through the entire distance of one hundred and twenty feet which would ultimately lead them beneath and beyond the main barbed fence to sweet freedom.

One day Michael was below digging out the sand in the sweltering heat and dragging it down the tunnel to the base of the horse. While Eric who was spotting the gymnasts had strolled away from the box for a few minutes towards the main gate to find out how many guards were there in the compound. Suddenly one of the men came running to meet him. He was panting and his face had turned pale.

"A portion of the ground has caved in!" he nervously blurted out.

"Is Michael safe down below?" asked Eric anxiously.

"We called him but received no answer," replied the other with a worried look.

Eric rushed towards the wooden box. Was Michael trapped by the fall of sand? He would be obviously caught in the tunnel, suffocating as there were no air-holes. But near the horse he saw a gymnast lying on the ground with a painful grimace while the others crowded round him. On noticing the sudden appearance of the hole this man with a presence of mind had fallen flat on it in order to hide it, pretending that he had hurt his leg. The ferrets in their boxes were curiously watching the goings-on.

"Quick, somebody please fetch a stretcher," said Eric as he slowly bent over the man on the ground. "Will you just roll over," he whispered. He rolled and revealed a hole as thick as an arm going down into the darkness of the tunnel as the others rounded over him.

"Michael!" Eric softly called, "Michael!"

To everyone's relief out of the tiny hole came a faint voice. "Hello Eric. I am okay and have nearly fixed the damage. Can you meanwhile fill it up from the top?"

The two men returned with the stretcher and a first aid kit. Eric made a great show of bandaging the supposedly injured man's leg. The others scuffled their feet, kicking the sand towards the hole. Michael down below managed to finish the job, close the trap door and conceal it by spreading the sand on the surface. Then carrying the wooden horse and the

man on the stretcher the team marched back to the barracks. They were just in time for the roll-call.

Gradually they improved upon the methods of digging and disposing the sand away. Now Eric and Michael together descended into the tunnel to increase the pace of the work. Then a third prisoner, Oliver Philpot, was taken into their fold in their daring attempt to escape.

On several occasions the Germans were on the point of discovering their secret plan. But luck favoured the prisoners. The wooden horse and the great tunnel remained intact and safe. The three men worked with great fervour and knew not from where they got all the strength.

Then one fine afternoon Michael was let down into the tunnel and left there to burrow through the last few feet. At the roll call someone suitably disguised took his place and his absence went unnoticed. Evening came and the vaulting box was brought out again. This time there were three men inside it, Eric, Oliver and a third man to replace the trap-door after they were gone.

The vaulting started with great enthusiasm. The guards, who had never seen such acrobatics in their lives, thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle. Though from time to time they cast a glance across the fence. Down below the three brave men crawled towards the tunnel's end. They were all dressed up in black, hoods and socks to resemble shadows in the night. Before long they broke out into the open air. Simultaneously the prison camp burst into a cacophony of sounds.

There were men blowing trumpets, singing, banging the sides of their wooden barracks and yelling at the top of their voices.

It was a good diversion for the German goons. They wondered at this sudden excitement of the prisoners. But they were unaware that some had already gone missing from the camp.

Meanwhile the three escapees quickly made their way, one after the other, to the pine forest. There they discarded their dark clothes and putting on civilian dress went to the nearby railway station. Indeed, they were free now but they were still in the heart of enemy territory. A careless slip of the tongue or a thoughtless gesture would surely betray their identities. It was the time of war and the German security forces patrolled every nook and corner like swarming bees.

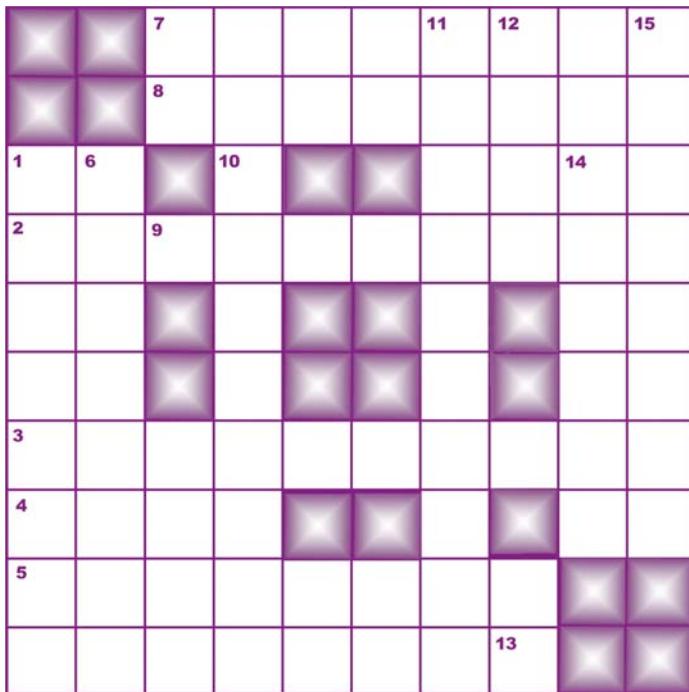
There followed several weeks of danger and suspense. Finally, under forged papers they managed to reach neutral Sweden, Eric and Michael as French workmen and Oliver as a Swedish trader. There the three came together and were soon flown home to Britain.

It was on 29 October, 1943 that these three brave and heroic adventurers escaped after four months of intense mental and physical endurance and with the selfless and unshakable support of their fellow prisoners.

This bid for freedom is no doubt one of the most dramatic and thrilling tales ever told.

-A.K.D

PUZZLE DAZZLE



Across:

1. You need this to send and receive mail as well as to log on a few sites (2).
3. An electronic device for storing and processing information (8).
4. Computer storage space is measured in — (4).
5. Private network that uses the same technology as the Internet (8).
7. Electronic information by a person or company published on the Internet's World Wide Web (7).
8. A device that converts visual information into digital data (7).
9. An input device that controls an on-screen pointer (5).
13. The programmes and instructions, which direct a computer (Reverse) (8).

Down:

2. The standard operating memory of the computer (3).
6. A magnetic storage medium on which data is digitally stored (4).

Chandamama

ALL ABOUT COMPUTER CROSSWORD



Here is a crossword on computer. Solve it using the clues given.

10. After searching the site, the search engine may say this word (4).
11. A global network connecting millions of computers (8).
12. Internet service allowing one computer to log onto another, connecting as if not remote (without the last 2 letters) (6).
14. A computer that delivers information and software to other computers linked by a network (6).
15. The physical, electrical and mechanical parts of the computer (8).

- by R Vaasugi

ANSWER: Across: 1. ID, 3. Computer, 4. Byte, 5. Internet, 7. Website, 8. Scanner, 9. Mouse, 10. Done, 12. Telnet, 13. Software, Down: 2. RAM, 6. Disk, 10. Done, 11. Internet, 14. Server, 15. Hardware.

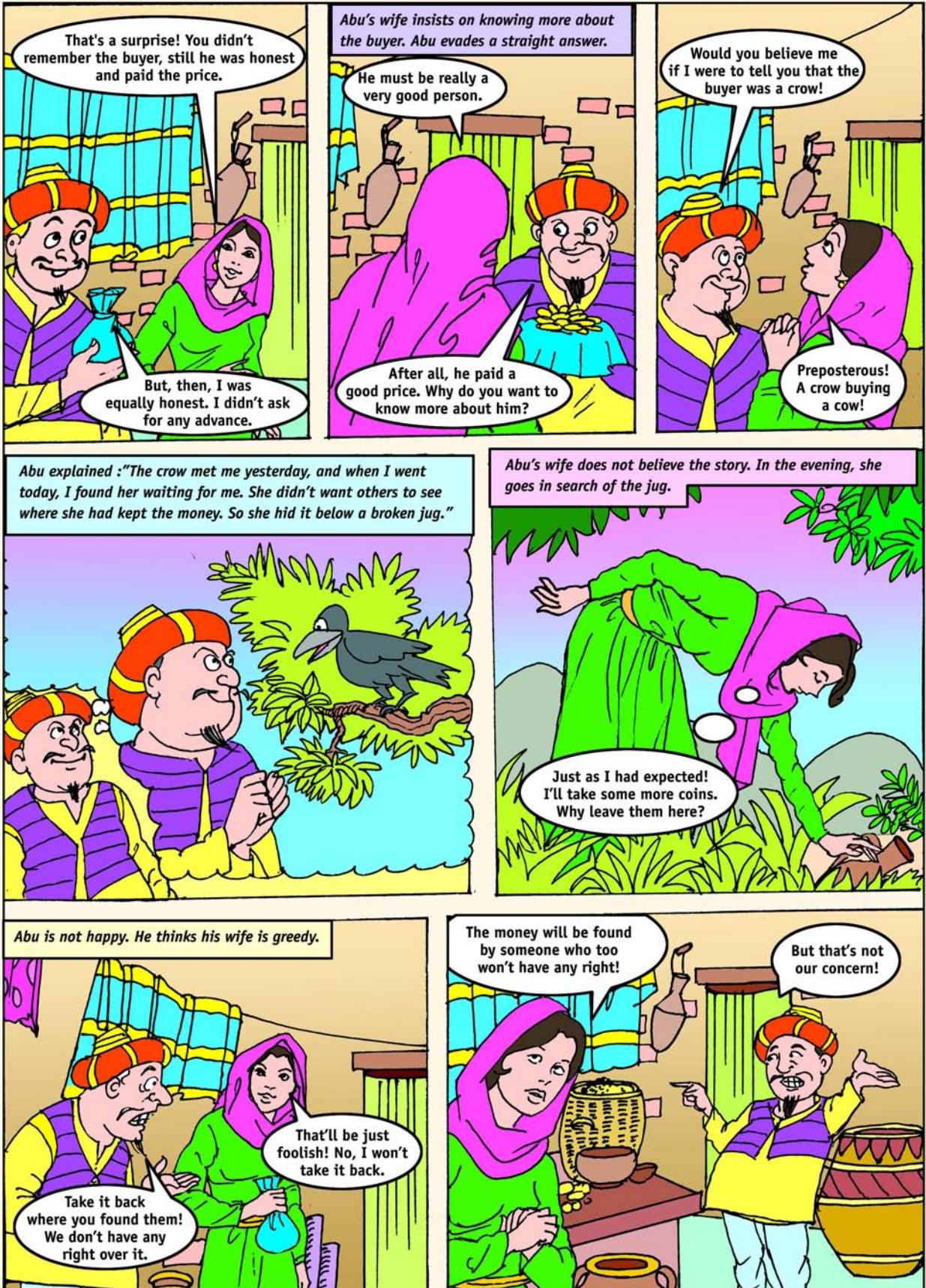
The Arabian Nights



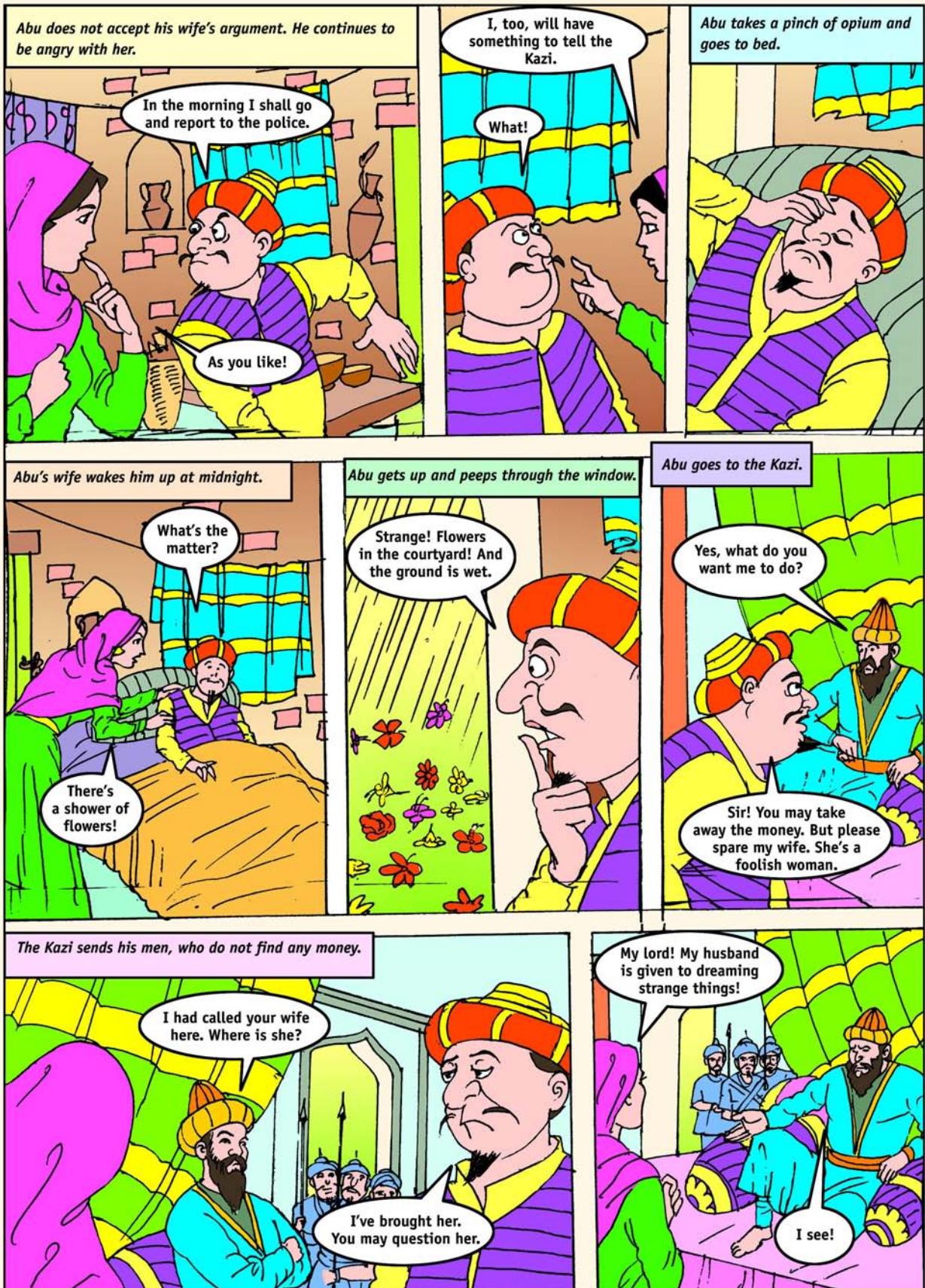
THE HONEST BUYER



The Arabian Nights



THE HONEST BUYER



The Arabian Nights



THE HONEST BUYER



CHANDAMAMA QUIZ ANSWERS

QUIZ - 1:

1. The Taj Mahal
2. From Persia, from where Emperor Humayun returned after exile; he was accompanied by painters Abdus Samad and Mulla Dost Muhammad.
3. Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata; Swami Vivekananda
4. In Disneyland; it is one of the theme parks, where one can imagine how the world would appear tomorrow and the day after.
5. Gattayya of Ramagundam, Andhra Pradesh.
6. Theory of Relativity— $E=mc^2$; Albert Einstein.
7. They are Shipra Mazumdar, Ashwini Pawar, Tshering Ladol, and Dechi Lhamo, all army women; they climbed the Everest.
8. One of the kingdoms in Java, an island in Indonesia.
9. Napoleon Bonaparte, who was on his way to France from Elba, where he had been in exile.
10. "Monkey trouble" by Ruskin Bond (February 2005)



All-correct entries received from:

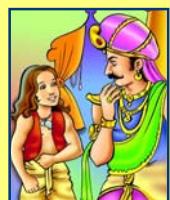
1. Sibashish Rath (12), Berhampur, Orissa
2. Sourav Das (13), Balasore, Orissa
3. Sangeeta Das (13), Visakhapatnam
4. Amaresh Guru (12), Bangarh, Orissa
5. Anjana Jayaram Rao (12), Chennai
6. Prabhat Ranjan Behera (13), Rourkela, Orissa
7. Divya E.(9), Chennai
8. Rituparna Datta (12), Kolkata
9. Mathew Kurian (10), Hyderabad
10. Jayalakshmi C. (15), Hubli

PRIZEWINNER (TAKEN BY LOT)

Rituparna Datta, Kolkata

QUIZ-2 :

1. Sania Mirza
2. Abdul Kassam Ismael of Persia
3. Soldiers guarding the Siachin border
4. Blackbuck
5. Subhaga was the mother of Aditya and Aditi. Aditya later came to be known as Shiladitya, the first Suryavanshi king
6. Zhang Tong of China. When a male child was born to him, the population of China reached the 1.3 billion mark.
7. Poet Kalidasa
8. Pavitra Prabhakar is the name given to Spiderman in comics appearing in the print media in India. Meera Jain is depicted as his girl friend.
9. Two new planets have been named after Senthali and Sharanya.
10. The King of Benares and the son of Yukka, a school teacher. From "The boy who could see footsteps" (March 2005)



All correct entries were received from :

1. Mathew Kurian (10), Hyderabad
2. Thirthashree (8), Yarpal
3. M.K.Chandrahasan (13), Yarpal
4. Anjana Jayaram Rao (12), Chennai

PRIZE-WINNER (TAKEN BY LOT)

Anjana Jayaram Rao, Chennai

CHANDAMAMA QUIZ-5

Co-sponsored by Infosys[®] FOUNDATION, Bangalore

All the questions are based on the contents of the issues of 2005.

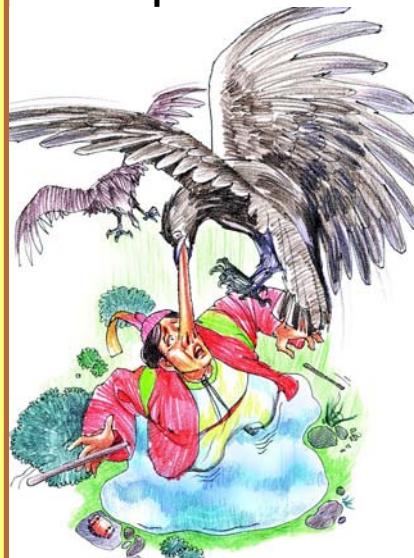
What you should do: 1. Write down the answers; 2. Mention your name, age (you should be below 16), full postal address with PIN Code; 3. Mention your subscriber number, if you are a subscriber; 4. Write on the envelope **CHANDAMAMA QUIZ-5** with your complete address; 5. Mail your entry to reach us by May 31, 2006; 6. The results will be published in the July issue.

AN ALL-CORRECT ENTRY WILL FETCH A CASH PRIZE OF RS 250*

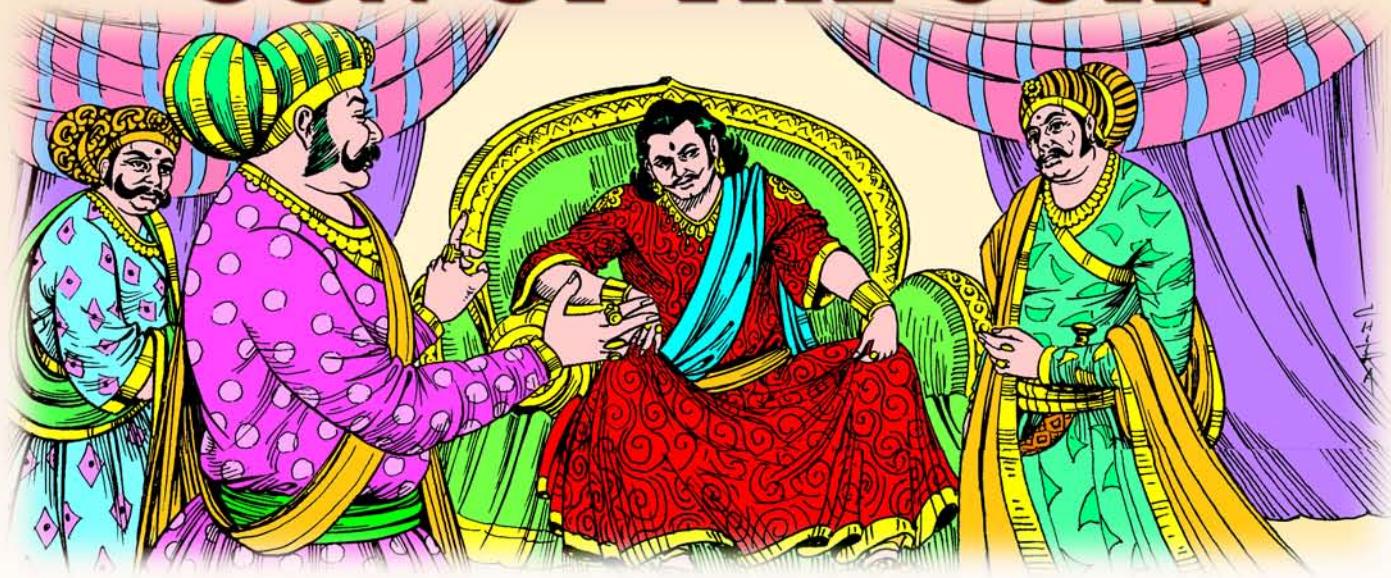
* If there are more than one all-correct entry, a lot will be taken to decide the prizewinner. However, the names of all those who have sent all-correct entries will be published.

1. "If there is one among you who wishes to kill your emperor, I am here." Who threw this daring challenge?
2. Is it true there is gold in the sun? Someone seems to have said, "Here is gold from the sun!" Who said that?
3. Who was the first European to discover River Niger in Africa?
4. Who is Aravaan? What is unique about this character?
5. What is "Disease X"? How is it caused?
6. What is 'phumdi'? Where in India can you see it?
7. Who was described as "unfit to be the ruler of a free people?"
8. The distance between two places is only 46 km, but there are 250 bridges to be crossed. Where in the world would you come across this unique place?
9. "Don't be afraid, Mother. I'm the king, and would like to know something from you." Who is the king? What is that he wants to know from the woman?

10. Identify the accompanying picture.



SON OF THE SOIL



Bhimsingh was a powerful ruler of the vast Magadh empire. All his ministers and officials discharged their duties from in the capital. The concentration of officials in the capital was posing some administrative problems. The vast empire could not be looked after properly.

So, Bhimsingh divided the empire into four provinces for administrative purposes and appointed one officer in each of the provinces.

On the advice of the council of ministers, the officers were chosen so that each one was a native of the same province. He was detailed by the emperor to look after the welfare of the province in such a way his province would better the others. All the four officers promised the emperor that they would go by his directions.

Though the intention of the emperor in encouraging a competitive spirit among his officers was something genuine, it was soon giving undesirable results. In their pursuit to push their respective province to the top in performance, they started acting in a parochial manner.

For instance, the northern province was endowed with natural black cotton soil congenial to cotton growing. But the weaving units were all

located in the south. Earlier, there was no embargo on transporting cotton to the south. But the northern zone now banned the transport of cotton to south, and ordered that the cotton produced there should be used in that province itself.

Hence, the workers of the weaving units in the south went without work, while the cotton produced in the north could not be fully utilized. Ultimately, the cotton growers suffered heavy losses, the weavers went without work and the cotton industry could not make any progress.

Similarly, there were many educational institutions in the west and students from all over the empire were studying there. The officer of the western zone banned admission of students from other provinces with the result the institutions in the west did not have enough number of students and the quality of education in the empire went down. Finally, it was seen that because of many such factors, the economy of the empire as a whole suffered.

The emperor was distressed to learn the state of affairs of his empire. He summoned the council of ministers and sought their advice. But he was not happy with their suggestions.

DID YOU KNOW?

The value of "pi" was first calculated by the Indian Mathematician Budhayana, and he explained the concept of what is known as the Pythagorean Theorem. He discovered this in the 6th century, long before the time the European mathematicians lived.



One day, a scholar called Sasidhar called on the king. The two were engaged in a lively discussion, in the course of which the emperor remarked: "I think the god almighty is very powerful. Everything in this world will happen only according to his will."

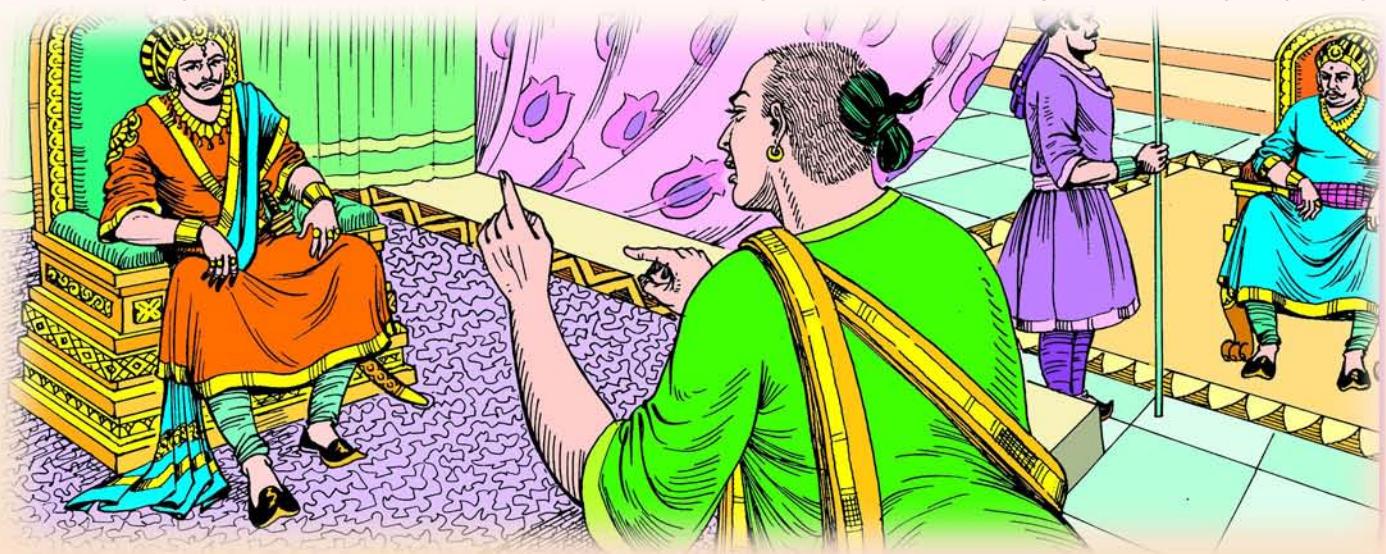
Sasidhar had a different view. "Sire, man is more powerful than god. He can even overrule god's will."

The emperor was surprised to hear such a reply coming from Sasidhar, who was otherwise known to be a pious man. Sasidhar continued : "Let me explain it to you, sire! I was teaching in a renowned university in the western region. People used to say I'm a good teacher. Earlier, I used to think that god has given me this talent with the intention that I should engage myself in the noble art of teaching throughout my life. One day, I was ordered by your regional officer to quit my post since I do not belong to the western region. Then, I understood that god proposes, but man disposes."

The emperor was shocked to learn Sasidhar's experience. At once, he could guess the reason for the downfall of his empire. He realized that his officers placed their own provinces above the empire. By adopting parochial and narrow-minded strategies, they had pushed the empire to the brink of disaster.

Sasidhar continued: " Even now it isn't too late, sire! You can change the present system immediately. You reshuffle your officers and post them each to a province which is not his native place. Advise them that each should continue to work for the welfare of the province in his charge, but not at the expense of other provinces. Every action of theirs should benefit not only their individual provinces but the empire as a whole. Please change their mindset and everything will be all right very soon."

Emperor Bhimsingh thanked Sasidhar for his valuable suggestion and immediately implemented the same. In a few years, the empire limped back to normalcy and started prospering.





STILL ENJOYING YOUR HOLIDAYS?

Some of you must have already plotted out your STORY or decided on the theme for the PAINTING for the Children's Special issue of Chandamama (November 2006) (Look for details in the April 2006 issue)

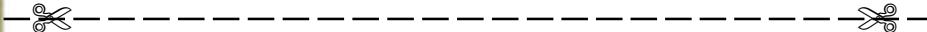
PRIZES OFFERED:

Stories - Rs 500 for a story selected for publication

Paintings - 1st Prize Rs 500; 2nd Prize Rs 300;

Three Consolation Prizes : Rs 200 each.

- ❖ Your original, unpublished story can be in any one of the 13 languages in which Chandamama is published.
- ❖ The synopsis of the incident on which the painting is made can be in any one of these languages.
- ❖ Your entries should be accompanied by the coupon below; photo copies will not be accepted.



I WISH TO SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING ENTRIES :

STORIES : Title :

1. _____

2. _____

PAINTINGS : Theme :

1. _____

2. _____

Name _____

Date of birth _____ Class _____ School _____

Residence _____

PIN Code _____

CERTIFIED that the entries are the original unaided effort of my son/daughter

Parent

Participant



“PRINCESS” OF PALANI HILLS

She is not a human being, yet she deserves all royal attributes. What is referred to here is the KURINJI flower which blooms once in 12 years. The year 2006 is, therefore, a special year (the flower had appeared last in 1994 and it has kept its cycle with calendar punctuality. This legendary flower has currently spread a blue blanket so to say over the slopes of the Palani Hills, between Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu and Munnar in Kerala. People call it the ‘Kurinji country’. One has to climb a height of 1,000 to 1,500 metres to have a close look at the breathtaking sight. The Kurinji Andavar temple in Kodaikanal Hills has one plant on which the flowers have blossomed; of course, you will never be satisfied with seeing the lone bush in bloom and will want to see more and more of the flowers. Incidentally, this temple was built in 1936 by an English woman who converted to Hinduism and changed her name to Leelavathi. After her husband, Ramanathan, was knighted, she came to be popularly known as Lady Ramanathan.

The Neela (blue) Kurinji (*Strobilanthes Kunthianus*) is, no doubt, a rare plant. The lord of the Palani Hills, Murugan (also called Subrahmanya, Karthikeya, Dandayudhapani), who is enshrined in the Palani temple, is believed to have waited till the Kurinji bloomed to wed Valli, a tribal girl. At the wedding, he adorned her with a garland of Kurinji flowers. No wonder, it is called ‘the flower of gods’.

The Palani Hills Committee for the Protection of Kurinji is taking steps to create a ‘sanctuary’ for the Kurinji growing in bushy shrubs. The Committee appeals to visitors not to pluck the flowers or to break the boughs as it will cause the plant to wither. “Stick to the bridle paths and feast your eyes!” says the Committee. You would sure return with a resolve to visit the Kurinji country again in the year 2018.



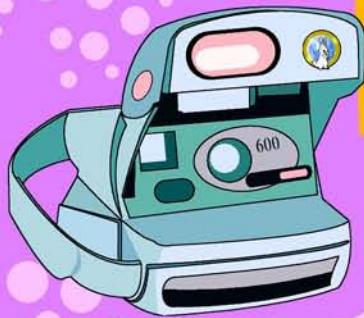


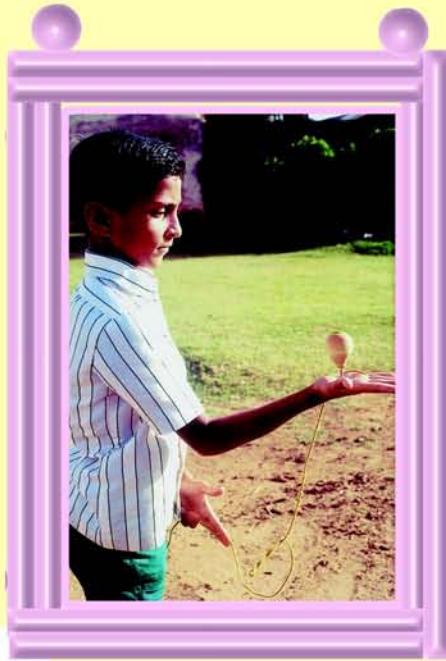
Photo Caption CONTEST

Can you write a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?

You may write it on a post card marking it:

**Photo Caption Contest,
CHANDAMAMA**

and mail it to reach us before the 20th of the current month.



MAHANTESH C. MORABAD



MAHANTESH C. MORABAD

Congratulations!

March 2006 Lucky Winner:

MANAV J.KOTIAN

C-14/15 Satya Darshan Society
Malpa Dongri No.3
ANDHERI (East)
Mumbai 400 093



WINNING ENTRY

**“NEW FRIEND”
“NEW WORK”**

The best entry will receive a Prize of Rs.100 and it will also be published in the issue after the next. Please write your address legibly and add PIN code.

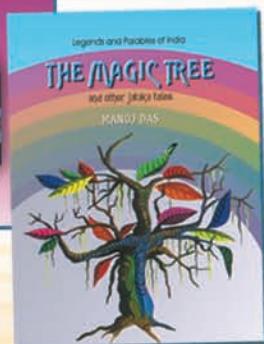
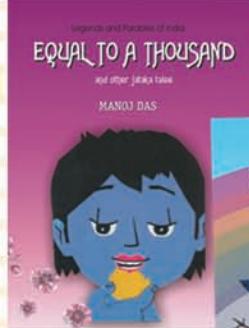
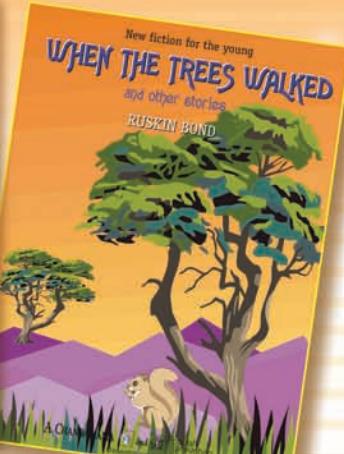
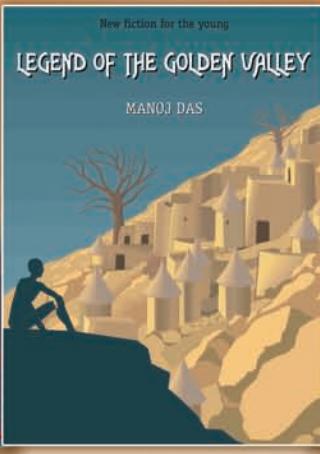
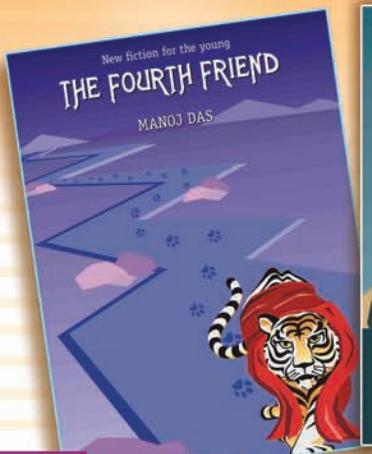
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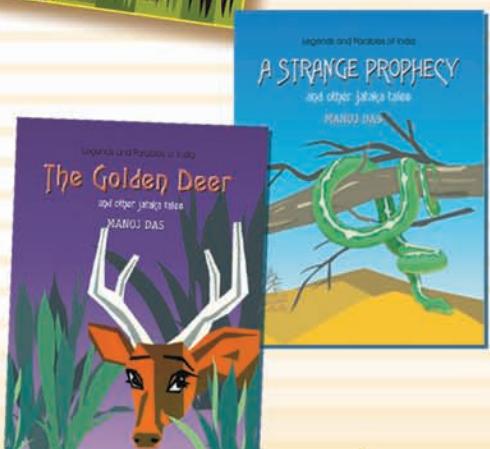
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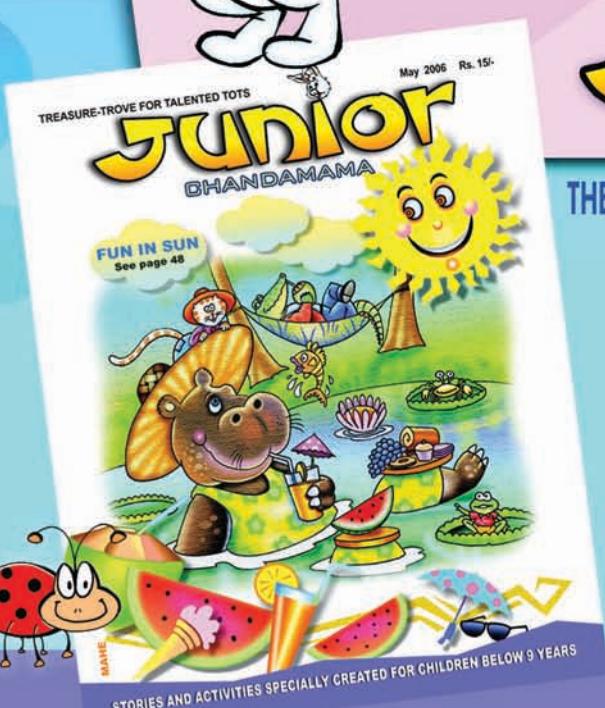
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